

# Broken Wings

BY  
OSSIP SCHUBIN

*Author of "Countess Erika's Apprenticeship," "One of Us," etc.*



ONCE A WEEK  
SEMI-MONTHLY  
LIBRARY



# Pears Soap

Pears' Soap does nothing but cleanse ; it has no medical properties, but brings back health and the color of health to many a sallow skin. Use it often. Give it time.



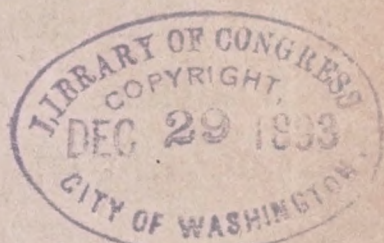
# BROKEN WINGS

BY

OSSIP SCHUBIN *pseud*

Author of "Countess Erika's Apprenticeship,"  
"One of Us," etc.

*40*  
*once a week* Kirschner, Sula



*Specially written for "Once a Week Library"*

*574381Y*

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1893, by

PETER FENELON COLLIER,

In the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.



# The Villain—

Disease—still pursues those who are weak. Flesh means strength. Solid, healthy flesh is supplied by

## Scott's Emulsion

of Cod-liver Oil, with hypophosphites of lime and soda. Disease is thus averted and the body is made healthy. *Physicians*, the world over, endorse it.

---

It is well to take Scott's Emulsion when recovering from an illness, but it is better to take it in time and *prevent* the illness.

Prepared by SCOTT & BOWNE, N. Y. Druggists sell it.



# BROKEN WINGS.

---

## FIRST BOOK.

SHE came of a good family, or, at all events, one that had always held itself somewhat high. Her father, whom she resembled, had been known as Baron Jewitsch, and her mother, whom she did not resemble, was a daughter of a noble family, the Von Ingelsheim.

Her father's family had not long been founded, so to speak, and, as for the title, it had been held only by the generation just before Nina's father; the mother, however, belonged to old landed nobility, and could boast of the most aristocratic connections. But the Jewitsch family was not in the habit of pluming itself on its high origin. If there was anything they were proud of it was the great mental gifts of their father, gifts which they would whisper—and this was an article of faith with the widow as well as all the children he had left—had always been a hindrance to him in his career, because he *would* go too deeply into things, and in consequence was apt to get into uncomfortable relations with his superior officers. That was not the way of promotion, and most decidedly not in the army. And Karl Jewitsch had been an officer in the cavalry.

Thanks to these somewhat excessive mental powers, he had never managed to rise beyond the rank of major, and was obliged to retire on half-pay when forty years of age. Before his four children grew up he was no more. And, although he left them in miserable circumstances, they held his memory in the greatest reverence and honor.

"Poor papa!" so they always said when speaking of



him, "poor papa! He might have done much better for himself, but there was too much in him; that's the simple fact—there was too much in him."

And Nina—Nina took after her father. Like him, she was "too gifted," and unfortunately for her it looked as though her case would be like his, and her mental qualities do no better for her than to make her life bitter and difficult.

As to the sons—they were both in the navy, and very clearly did not regard themselves as gifted, otherwise they would hardly have ventured upon the career of arms, military or naval—the sons went simply on their path in life, patiently waiting for promotion as it might come to them. They suffered, as Austrians of good family in poor circumstances are so apt to, from an excess of shyness and modesty, which made it impossible for them to force their way upward or to claim the protection and patronage influential family relations might have afforded, and other such means of getting on. The only thing they did to make for themselves a "career" in life was to fulfill the duties of their position in a straightforward and blameless manner. And they managed to save some very moderate sums out of their scanty pay, which they sent home every month with exemplary regularity.

The poor mother used to receive these sadly scanty offerings with tears in her eyes. She knew only too well that her sons had saved the money by denying themselves what really were almost the necessities of life to them. And, knowing this, she made the least possible use of what she used to call the "starvation fund;" and, in fact, she employed it only for the purpose of getting something for her boys themselves which they needed, and which, in fact, she never allowed them to be long without. She worshiped her boys, and with the best of reasons.

Although the sons bore their straitened circumstances with such truly rational patience, yet they held themselves erect, were of independent spirit, and had lost not a particle of elasticity and strength of character. The



smallest pleasure that came in their way was enjoyed by them like children, while the large and expensive pleasures of others touched no chord of envy in them—nay, were rather regarded by them, from the distance in which their poverty placed them from such delights, with genuine and unaffected pleasure. It was their habit, when they had leave of absence, to go “home” in excitement very like that of schoolboys, and it never occurred to them to spend their leave otherwise than with “mother.” They slept in a dark little room whose only light was from a pane of glass inserted in the door; and their only amusement consisted in now teasing and now spoiling their sisters, in gossiping away the time with their hands in their pockets, comfortably relieved from the stiffness necessary when on service, and especially in trotting about after their mother when she was engaged in the performance of her household duties.

These duties amounted to pretty continuous and severe work. The baroness shrank at nothing; she cooked, ironed, washed, anything, in short, that was wanted, and it not infrequently happened that one of the young naval officers took his hands out of his pockets to share in his good mother’s labors, which he would do with all a sailor’s handiness and in the best of temper and the highest spirits, as though it were all the best fun in the world.

Yes, indeed, her “brave boys” were the greatest comfort to the baroness; and that they would get on fairly enough in life, in spite of their modest and contented habit of mind, she never allowed herself to doubt for a single moment.

Unhappily, it was not so well with the girls. Certainly the younger ones got on fairly well; they had their brothers’ sanguine temperament, every movement of their young frames was pleasure to them, even if that movement was for nothing more exalted than scouring and cleaning up generally. They exhibited the most extraordinary capabilities for every sort of household occupation. They not only cut out all the garments for every female member of the family, but also did all the sewing of their brothers’ linen. But beyond these do-



mestic endowments—thanks and praise be to God for it!—they had no especial talent or gift whatever, unless it may be called a special talent to keep up, as they did amid very difficult circumstances, a personal appearance that was the perfection of neatness and order.

But the eldest—but Nina—poor girl! She, like her father, was too “highly gifted.”

That she *was* “highly gifted” was matter of general and familiar statement and pride; but if anybody had been forced to determine precisely in what these vague and exceptional gifts consisted, it would have been found pretty difficult to do so. The only thing clear was that these gifts disclosed themselves in a—perhaps preliminary—stage of confused aspirations and unconcealed discontent with life. But she was, at all events, the sort of person whom people speak of as “an interesting individuality,” decidedly no every-day type of being; she was out of the common way, indeed “extraordinary,” it might be said; only, unfortunately, she was only “extraordinary” enough to feel uncomfortable in ordinary circumstances, *not* “extraordinary” enough to be able to transform those circumstances to something suiting her better.

As to talents of a positive and particular kind, she had but one, and that in a very small way; she played the piano prettily, with very defective technique, but with expression, though *that* was rather peculiar to herself than deep or true.

But nothing came of that. The time came when she really tried to overcome the technical difficulties of the instrument by persevering, but, unhappily, excessive practicing, the result of which was that she permanently disabled her third finger. This deprived her of all the hope of a successful artistic career, with which she had for a while flattered herself. And now her existence was without any tangible aim or end.

But that she had a different and much more precious gift than her little bit of talent for music and the piano she had not then learned, and that was—great and even extraordinary beauty.

Indeed, they were all more or less handsome in that



family, beginning with the mother, whom people turned to gaze at in the street, in spite of her gray hairs, too soon gray, so delicate was her profile and so lively the sparkle of her deep black eyes. So that Nina's exterior did not so far draw especial remark; besides, the family traditions, in which the baroness had been brought up, were somewhat narrow and severe, and it was no part of these to allow of anything that could induce their girls to pay particular attention to their forms and faces, and the baroness brought up her daughters in strict conformity to these traditions.

Thus Nina dragged on, rather than lived, her life in a sort of tired way from day to day, and asked herself continually, "For what?"

Mother, sisters and brothers vied with each other in spoiling her, and were full of pity for her that she alone, of all of them, was wholly wanting in the power, so strong in them, of feeling herself at ease and even happy, as they were, in the unsatisfactory circumstances imposed upon them by what was beyond their own control. She could not but appreciate this patient goodness of theirs, and that it was scarcely deserved by her, and she was grateful to them for it, and showed her gratitude sometimes in outbreaks of passionately demonstrative affection, which, as a rule, ended in a violent outburst of tears. But even in the midst of her warmest and sincerest tenderness she was haunted by a certain sense of superiority over them, actuated by a certain tendency to the assertion of an intellectual preponderance over them; and these faults, if such they were, she had inherited from her father.

All this went on till she completed her four-and-twentieth year; but nothing in her circumstances was altered, except that her brothers gained a step in rank which enabled them to send home ten, instead of five, of those painfully-saved small coins, and that a very highly-placed relative invited Nina to spend some time with her. This change enabled the girl to see something of life on a larger scale than she had yet known in any way, except what she might gather from the reading of novels; and



the consequence was that she brought back to her home, with renewal of her physical strength gained by a visit all too short to satisfy, a diminished stock of patience with the poor circumstances of her home, which, indeed, now became insupportable to her.

Even before this she had been subject to attacks of nervous irritability, but now these occurred with still greater frequency; then followed self-reproach, violent, even unmeasured. And it would have been difficult to decide which was the more painful to her family, the fault or the repentance. So, as might be expected, the time at last came when she could no longer endure the monotony of enforced leisure with no prospects of any kind before it. She startled her mother and sisters by declaring that she had made up her mind to go to Paris to perfect herself in the language; when she returned thence, perhaps she might be in a position to earn something for her family, and to make some return to them for the wonderful patience and love they had blessed her with in all these long years.

The mother shook her head; the brothers declared themselves against the plan with as much heat as these good creatures could show; but Nina's will was the strongest in the family, notwithstanding her variations of temper, due, indeed, only to nervous irritability. So she carried out her purpose with inflexible energy.

One of her former teachers procured for her a place in a French school, where she was to have gratuitous board and lodging; that is to say, that she was to give in return two pianoforte lessons a day to some of the pupils. She took leave of her mother and sisters with many tears and kisses. As the cars started to take her away, they all cried to her: "Return soon, return soon, soon, soon!" She waved her pocket-handkerchief to them as long as they were in sight, and then fell back sobbing, as if her heart would break, on her seat. The train creaked and groaned like some horrible monster carrying off its innocent prey. But in the very midst of her suffering, which certainly was great—the suffering of a girl-creature feeling herself for the first time outside of the protecting



warmth of household and family life—she was conscious of a feeling of curiosity and expectation. When she had cried till she could cry no longer, she began to build castles in the air. Then, all of a sudden, there came back to her the voices of mother and sister calling to her: “Come back soon—soon, quite, quite soon!” And then she felt a strong impulse to throw herself out of the window of the car and run back after them through the cold, bare autumn night, back to them and to that narrowness of her home which was so full of love and of protecting guardianship! When, oh! when, should she see them, see that home again?

---

PARIS! PARIS! She had read of it, she had heard so much of it, she had dreamed so much of it! She had pictured it to herself now and again until it appeared to her mental vision in something like the palpable shape in which a believing Christian sees his heaven or hell. To her it was something strangely compounded of the attractive and the repulsive, something more like a fairy tale than anything else, something grandiose, magnificent, something which needs must show itself at the very first glance utterly unlike and beyond everything else.

She arrived about six o'clock in the morning, hungry, frozen to death almost, and found herself in an enormous and dirty railway station, in which the custom-house officers were soon busily pasting their labels in a disdainful and depreciating manner upon her little trunk, without opening it and vouchsafing a single glance at its modest contents. She had up to that day never arrived anywhere without having been met and escorted away by some one. A feeling of desolation almost choked her, and a sense of shame at her impoverished condition lay heavily upon her. A lady, with children and quite a large wagon filled with baggage, maid and servants, who had traveled on the same train with her, absorbed all the attention of every railroad employee, from the porters upward, in the neighborhood. Poor Nina was too shy to



stir or do anything for herself. At last there came along a *commissionaire* and asked her, with the amiable courtesy so often shown by Frenchmen to solitary and helpless women, however poor in appearance they may be, whether he could be of any service to her, and if she did not want a carriage. She burst into tears, and was ready to fall on his neck, so much was she moved by the fact that any one had a kind word to give her. A few minutes afterward she was rolling away in a little yellow cab through a perfect labyrinth of streets to her destination. In every direction round her she saw nothing but very tall and dirty houses, girdled about with many balconies of iron, and having a quantity of the shutters called *jalousies*. Wherever there was a gap between the houses there were walls placarded or painted with grotesque advertisements; everywhere there was damp and slipperiness; the air was filled with a sort of foul odor. There was cold white fog, which seemed, as it were, creeping over the damp, black stones. There were a few lamps not yet extinguished that seemed to have been making a night of it and forgotten to go home, and looked melancholy enough with the long dark intervals between them. The very morning looked like Melancholy itself. And now and again she saw crawling along some tired and highly-rouged woman, and, following in her footsteps and trying to overtake her, some man in a white, dirty blouse, staggering along, just out of some evil drinking-shop.

And this was Paris!

This was the haven of good Fortune; this, into which she had flung herself body and soul, in full expectation of drawing the first prize in its lottery.

Madame Legrand's boarding-school was situate at Neuilly, in a house standing somewhat apart from other buildings and in the middle of a garden. The shutters were still closed, and it was clear that all its inmates were still in their beds when the yellow cab with Nina and her poor little trunk pulled up at it. A servant-man opened the door after awhile, and disclosed a hall somewhat small, but which was kept carefully clean. She



paid the cabman, and the servant lifted the little black trunk to his shoulder. A woman, with a white cap and a big blue apron, came out of a side door opening onto the hall.

"Is it the new German teacher?" asked she.

Nina, for the moment, did not understand her.

"The new pianoforte teacher?" asked the woman, speaking more slowly and louder, and carefully pronouncing every syllable, evidently thinking that the foreigner did not understand her; "the new pianoforte teacher?"

This time Nina did take in her meaning.

"Teacher!" Up to this moment, in spite of her poverty, she had still been Baroness Jewitsch with everybody; that is to say, a person of exceptional position and the object of respectful attention on all occasions. She had never thought much about the point; but, so far as she had done so, she came to this new life with the idea that she would hold a position of her own in Mme. Legrand's boarding-school, too, and that she would be treated somewhat as a distinguished amateur musician. And now—pianoforte teacher, indeed!

The word pierced her keenly, but she nodded affirmatively. The portress—for such was the woman in the white cap—who, it was plain, had come forward to receive Nina respectfully, led the way upstairs to her chamber, where the man-servant, her husband, deposited her trunk. The chamber was immediately under the roof, and had a slanting ceiling. A part of it was so low that Nina, who was much above middle height, could not stand quite upright under it. The walls were painted with oil color of an arsenic-green shade; the floor was tiled, and covered scantily with carpet, frayed at the edges, all the color of which had long been trodden out by numerous feet. The rest of the furniture consisted of a small iron bed, a table, a chair and a looking-glass. There was but one window, and it had curtains showing patches, indeed; but, at all events, just washed and starched, and clean enough.

"We have done something a little out of the way for



mademoiselle," said the portress, who was a good-tempered creature enough, and seemed to understand in some degree the extreme oppression of spirit under which the young girl was laboring. "Yes, indeed, quite out of the way. I washed the curtains myself, though washing day had not come round, and the other teachers haven't got such a thing as a looking-glass. But we knew something about mademoiselle, and that she had been a little spoiled. But how pale mademoiselle looks? mademoiselle must surely be regularly frozen to death! First of all, I really will go and get mademoiselle some breakfast. When one has something warm on the stomach one can take life much more merrily." And the portress trotted off.

In a short time she brought the breakfast. Nina, meantime, had taken off her traveling-cloak and hat and washed the coal-dust from her face.

"There, mademoiselle," cried the portress, as she placed the breakfast upon the little table. Then, all of a sudden, after gazing fixedly awhile at the young girl, she struck her hands together and exclaimed: "Dieu! How very pretty mademoiselle is!" then she shook her head and added, in somewhat saddened tones: "But it's a pity, all the same; it's a pity, it's a pity," and left the room.

Nina was half crazy with hunger, and sat down to the breakfast. What a breakfast! A big cup of very thick porcelain filled with a gray fluid, on the top of which floated some milk-curds, a piece of stale, common bread, a tiny dish with some yellow, semi-fluid butter, and all these delicacies resting on a tea-tray, lackered green and bent in every direction.

Though sickened nearly to death at all this, she did her best to swallow some of the hot, green fluid—whether coffee or cocoa, she could not distinguish—her head began to swim; she took a small piece of bread and buttered it. This, too, she could not manage to get down. Then, suddenly, the longing for her home seized her so violently that she felt as though she should lose her senses. The memory of her breakfasts at home came to her;



there was nothing but a roll and some coffee, with milk, but the roll was golden yellow and cracked crisply under the fingers, and the coffee—why, special pains were always given to Nina's coffee. It was always strained carefully before they brought it to her, otherwise she would not drink it. And when Nina did not drink her coffee, the thing was something like a household catastrophe, a family misfortune causing great agitation and excitement.

For the first time in her life she realized to the full how utterly she had been petted and spoiled. Tears dropped upon the poor old twisted tea-tray, and she pushed it from her with a deep sigh. The words of the portress came back to her and shook her very soul: "Dieu! How very pretty mademoiselle is; but it's sad, all the same, it's sad!" And in the very depth of her misery a sudden thrill of delight went through her. "Pretty—pretty!" She went to the looking-glass. She saw a tall form, full, but not too full; ample shoulders; a slight waist; reddish-brown hair playing about her forehead in small, tender curls, just now a good deal rumped; large brown eyes full of fire; a rich, soft mouth; an upper lip a little too short; cheeks rounded; bearing and countenance both fraught with the somewhat melancholy charm that attends the young girl in whom the sensuous element is still utterly unconscious of itself and everything is mere innocent yearning; and, added to all this, a gray costume which, modest as it was, seemed to become her in a marked degree, and a head of hair so rich and so finely arranged that a painter might have gone crazy over it.

In a word, she stood there representing the very type and model of the Austrian woman of a certain class, and that all the more as being an officer's daughter. And this type is the product of the strangest and most incongruent things—incongruencies of race, of nationality, of rank—which, in her case as with the others, had been increasing with each generation, and resulted in a product full of charm, a flower rich in bloom, a perfume and every beauty; but which, alas! alas! required the



protective and expensive atmosphere of a green-house if it was to flourish in safety.

For the first time there came with a sudden stroke into her mind the thought that possibly there might be some way of escape from all this misery—and that in a direction which she had never sought. That beauty to a girl in her circumstances was anything but a happy privilege—a serious danger rather—was a thing of which she had had not the faintest idea. But the last words of the portress came back to her, those words added after the first admiring exclamation, and poor Nina shook her head seriously as she repeated them to herself, “But it’s sad, all the same; it’s sad, sad!”

But these words were distasteful to her, and she tried to put them away from her thought, and to enjoy without any such alloy those first words of naïve and involuntary admiration. Hope stirred its tired wings with that renewal of motion belonging to its nature; and in the very midst of hunger, cold, longings for home, an expectation rose in her of an unknown something, something full of splendor, full of wonder! Poor Nina! Poor Nina!

---

IF anything wonderful was in store for her it would have to be waited for; but that the last words of the portress were only too true Nina was to learn very soon.

A few hours later she was called down to Mme. Legrand, and that lady began with a few obliging and amicable observations, which were, after all, cold and guarded, and consisted principally of instructions as to Nina’s duties in the school. And then madame came to the point to which those remarks had clearly been only introductory:

“My dear young lady, I am sorry, indeed, to have to draw your attention to it, but your mode of arranging your hair is simply impossible, quite impossible, and your way of dressing is—well, to put it as shortly as may be—inadmissible.”



The blood rushed to the cheeks of the young girl.

"What do you mean, madame! My hair and my dress are just what is usual with young girls in Austria," she replied to the French woman.

Madame was a lady of about fifty years of age, dressed in black silk made up, clearly of set purpose, in a very old-fashioned way, and her yellow, sharply-cut countenance was tightly framed in bands of hair carefully smoothed. She bit her lips and measured Nina carefully with a glance anything but benevolent from head to foot; the lady was not at all used to being answered—it was quite a liberty. And she spoke now with a heightened voice and very sharply and distinctly.

"Austrian usage is Austrian usage; but it is out of the question that it should settle what is proper for Paris. We *are* in Paris; and your style in the hair and in your dress is absolutely inadmissible for a person in your position. It will form part of your duties from time to time to accompany one or the other of my young charges when they go out, and it is not to be thought of that I should confide the young girls intrusted to me to the escort of a lady who would know only too well that some one would accost her in the street."

This was Madame Legrand's last word. Nina had no course left but to withdraw.

Half an hour later, as she sat crying bitterly in her room and trying in vain to summon up courage to write home, there was a knock at her door. She said "come in" in scarcely audible tones, and in there walked a person of her own sex, of about forty years old, dressed in black, large and angular, with intelligent black eyes and a countenance showing deep color and somewhat dry and stern features.

"You are the young Austrian who was expected, isn't it so?" she began, in a pleasant and somewhat deep voice. "Pray allow me to present myself to you as a fellow-countrywoman and colleague here. I am here under the same conditions as yourself, what they call 'at par'; that means that I don't pay for my board and lodging, but in personal services, my object being to



perfect my French. My name is Augusta Jaworsky. I am a Prague woman."

Up to that point the newcomer had spoken somewhat carelessly, even roughly, as though she meant to say, "Here I am; if I can be of any use to you, I'm ready; if you don't want anything to do with me, *that's* all right, too, I shan't worry myself about it." Then she suddenly fixed her eyes on Nina; her large countenance took an expression of indescribable, almost motherly, compassion. She opened her arms and drew the charming creature, tears and all, to her broad breast.

"You my colleague! You an assistant here like myself?" she exclaimed. "Why, how can such a thing be possible? Why, you look like a child, and like a princess, into the bargain!"

"Madame Legrand has told me that I look like a person who would be quite sure or quite well aware that somebody would speak to her in the street," sobbed Nina.

Miss Augusta Jaworsky took on a very serious countenance.

"Unfortunately, unfortunately Mme. Legrand is only too right," she replied, with a sigh; "but there is nothing in what she said to offend one, if her words be taken in the proper sense. Pray allow me to sit down, my dear child."

Nina cleared off her things that were on the only chair in the room and pushed it toward Miss Augusta Jaworsky, while she herself sank down, rather than seated herself, on the bed.

"Madame Legrand might have expressed herself more amicably," so began the Prague lady; "but she is right in the main. In Paris, grace and geniality in appearance and manner are allowed to women of the highest position; but beside these, only to grisettes and—something worse."

It appeared directly that poor Nina, in spite of her considerable and ill-regulated reading, had but a very casual and indistinct idea of what a grisette was, and, as to the "something worse," of that she had not the very



faintest idea. Miss Jaworsky sighed; she explained the matter, but it gave her no little difficulty to do so.

Then, while Nina, as red as she could be with shame, turned her face to the wall, she continued:

"Girls in our position must not only *not* challenge the attention of the men; they must positively do everything to escape from it if they—well, to put it plainly, if they want it to be quite clear that it is their purpose to remain respectable. As to me, there was no difficulty at all; a kind Providence has taken the best of care of me in all those respects. But as to you, how you are going to manage matters so that the men's eyes won't be full of you, the Lord in heaven only knows! There is nothing in that which can wound your feelings, not at all; it is not your fault. Only, my dear child, were you *obliged* to come to this place; was there really no other alternative?"

Nina sobbed. "Alas! I had nothing to do at home, and so I became really an insupportable creature. I kept them all in torture, and they were so good and patient with me. I came here to improve myself, so that I might earn something later and make some return for all their goodness."

Miss Augusta Jaworsky was silent for a minute or two, and then asked:

"Have you breakfasted yet?"

"I couldn't; it was too dreadfully bad."

"Well," said Miss Jaworsky, "I couldn't either at first. At the outset there is nothing for it but to get rather better food than the regular diet here."

Nina blushed and looked down. Augusta Jaworsky cleared her throat and then asked:

"Have you got anything like enough to go on with?"

Nina's pride was up in arms against the over-straight-forwardness of the lady from Prague. She clinched her teeth and remained silent.

Augusta Jaworsky shook her big, good-humored head in a melancholy manner.

"You really must not take amiss my rough-and-ready way of coming to the point. Well, well, I needn't have



asked; your finances are in a bad way, otherwise you would not have come here at all; that's certain. I was in exactly the same case as you, only I had this advantage over you, that I was no beauty, and that I am a loaf not baked with such particularly fine dough as you are. I declare, it cuts me to the heart only to look at you! Now, don't you cry; don't cry, it will all turn out for the best. When I came here I had not a red cent in my pocket, and now I get on famously. You must set about getting some other work besides what you do in the school. You are musical?"

"Yes," in a very small voice.

"Perhaps you will be able to give one or two lessons outside. But, just look at you! You are as pale as death! We must set about strengthening you up a bit."

Augusta vanished, but appeared in a very little while with a bottle of port wine, a glass and a stick of chocolate.

"There, my dear angel, just you get a little strength for yourself," said she, forcing the wine upon Nina. "I have always something of the sort by me."

Nina drank with great satisfaction, and nibbled at the chocolate with great gusto. She enjoyed everything that tasted well; agreeable sensations were quite to her mind every way. She was of a tender and sensitive bodily constitution, poor thing!

"Poor little fool! poor little fool!" murmured the Jaworsky tenderly to herself, and poured out a second glass of wine for the girl.

Nina's saddened eyes soon began to shine with their usual brightness for this little refreshment, and she looked ten times more seductive than ever as she asked:

"And have you some other work outside?"

"I? why certainly. All sorts of work," the other replied with a laugh. "Three afternoons in the week I take the daughters of Countess Gebriani out for a walk; three other afternoons I teach the sons of a rich stockbroker Latin, and at night I work at a glossary, which a learned Parisian has ordered of me for a new Sanskrit grammar."



“What? Do you know some Sanskrit?” asked Nina, nibbling her chocolate-stick all the while.

“Oh, I know lots of things,” replied Augusta. “I’ll tell you what, I haven’t talents, and I haven’t beauty; but I am a creature that people can make use of.”

---

A LIFE of routine now set in for her. Nina Jewitsch became accustomed to drink her *café au lait* with curdled milk in it, and also to intercourse with people who asked her boldly to her face how much pocket-money she had to spend every month.

Moreover, she soon learned to feel a truly sincere love for the angular and heavy Jaworsky, who had loved her from the first. Augusta was a powerfully supporting staff to her from the outset. Without this friend she would have found life quite unendurable in the boarding-house. Augusta’s room was in the attic, too, and next to Nina’s; she brought her every day a glass of port-wine, presented her with a warm woolen cover for her bed—as Nina almost froze in the night—sat for hours on her bed for company when Nina cried for her home and mother; sometimes, too, when the mice were too alarming. She set the mousetraps, too, and made her appearance in the middle of the night for the purpose of putting the mice caught to death, a thing Nina could not bring herself to do, while she was just as unable to withdraw her attention from the funny figures the mice made in the trap. Then Augusta went back to her own room, and while Nina lay quiet with her eyes shut in sleep, the Jaworsky, wrapped up in a heavy gray officer’s cloak—her brother had been an officer in the commissariat reserve—with knitted mittens to keep her wrists warm and a thick red woolen cap on her head, went on without flinching with her Sanskrit glossary till three or four o’clock of the morning.

She got Nina pianoforte lessons, six lessons a week, at five francs a lesson, in highly respectable families, who belonged principally to the more well-to-do among the



manufacturing class. One of these was a coach-builder, sufficiently rich to possess a somewhat famous art collection.

"My dear child," explained Augusta to her protégée, "your musical attainments are not high enough for people of better circles. But these people are proud of having their children taught by a baroness. I have dazzled them a good deal with accounts of your aristocratic position, and I beg of you don't be too unassuming with them; that would only hurt things."

It was part of Nina's duty, besides the couple of piano lessons which she gave every day, to play dance-music for two hours every Sunday afternoon in the school-room, where the pupils had an improvised ball.

This sort of service seemed something almost menial to Nina, and was more painful to her than words can say. The dance-music was enough of itself to depress her spirits, and the noisy enjoyment of the school-girls, nearly grown-up girls, tried her nerves to an insupportable extent. She shed tears nearly every time that she played. Augusta Jaworsky freed her from this torture. She asked and got permission from Mme. Legrand to substitute herself, and from that time forward, with all her amazing perseverance and a touch of quite amazing robustness, hammered away at waltzes, polkas and quadrilles till the pupils had quite as much as even they wanted. As for herself, she seemed not to know what fatigue meant.

---

A FAMOUS person in her way was this Augusta Jaworsky. She had lost both parents. Her whole family consisted of one only brother, who had taken it into his head that he was to become a celebrated man, and who, till the celebrity came, was acting in the capacity of a loafer. Meantime, poor Augusta got together the stones which were to make a pedestal for him. She sacrificed her little property on the fellow, and now went on working hard to support him. What little portion of fancy and imagination she possessed all went to keep up her belief



in his future and in exaggerating his talents. In all other respects she was as far as possible from any tendency to take over-large views of things, and, apart from her wonderful goodness of heart, was of a rather dry and sober constitution of mind. She took persons and things just as she found them, without exacting or expecting much of them, and accordingly went through life in tolerable tranquillity, forming no ideals and suffering from no illusions.

She had a sound working character, without any sort of subtlety; clear understanding, without any particular fire or force of mind. Herself a perfect model of regularity and good conduct by temperament and training, she treated the weaknesses of her fellow-creatures with something more than philosophic tolerance, almost with cynical indifference. Nothing seemed capable of disgusting her physical or moral sense.

Nina learned from her much which she would have far preferred not to know, about many of the female teachers, even about Mme. Legrand herself. This lady, so Augusta told her in cold blood, had formerly been a great deal too much the friend of the highly-placed ecclesiastic under whose patronage the school had reached its present flourishing position.

"Of course, you won't tell anybody a word of all this," so she generally ended disclosures of this kind.

"Not likely, indeed!" cried Nina. "It is bad enough to know anything about it myself; I sha'n't be able to look Mme. Legrand in the face. I can't help asking myself whether I ought to remain any longer in this house."

"Oh, if you have made up your mind to be off from Paris, the sooner the better," replied Augusta; "but if you have any idea of remaining in Paris, the more you change your whereabouts the worse it will be for you. You'll find the same sort of thing going on everywhere that you do here. The house is kept with all severe external respectability, and you can't expect more. Why do you trouble yourself about things that don't concern you?"



“But—but,” said Nina, warmly, “the contaminating effect—”

“Oh, dear!” said Augusta, phlegmatically, “people like us must not be so shy and particular. We might just as well say we wouldn’t go out in muddy weather. We’ve got to put up with things. Just clap on a pair of overshoes, hitch up one’s petticoats a bit, and then go through it as best one may and look out for one’s self not to get too much mud on one. If one looks about at the other folks to see what *they* are doing or thinking, one’s pretty sure to slip and tumble in the mire before you know where you are.”

This way of looking at matters Nina could not accustom herself to; she went on feeling deep disgust for things in which she still could not help interesting herself more than was to be desired, while the same things inspired in Augusta neither interest nor disgust.

---

WITHOUT laying herself out for it particularly, this most sensible Augusta had made for herself quite a position in the learned world of Paris. She was personally acquainted with Renan and Pasteur. Nina, who was also ambitious, begged her assistance in filling up the large gaps in her too purely aristocratic education. And Augusta provided her with reading suitable for the purpose.

So it came to pass that Nina spent her nights aimlessly in reading things she could not understand. Augusta brought her works on philosophy, books whose highest achievement seemed to be the increasing of our doubts and the weakening of all our beliefs, even if they did not carry their readers into absolute infidelity. In the intervals between reading these she swallowed, with passionate interest, all sorts of romances, which she got for herself from a circulating library, works whose principal interest it seemed to be to put a fair face upon such sins as had hitherto been the most repulsive of all to her. The consequence was that the moral sentiments which she had brought with her from home, and which were more



than usually precisian, even pedantic, soon fell into the most deplorable confusion and disorder.

The excuses for departure from duty in these romances were only too clearly and attractively, even poetically, put; the foundation reasoning upon which the necessity of virtuous self-restraint was built up in the works of the philosophers seemed colorless and every way unsatisfactory. All, or nearly all, the philosophers declared that it was a positive necessity to be virtuous; but *why* that should be so none of them seemed to be able to show with anything like conclusiveness.

At the outset, when these shakings of her soul began, Nina quieted herself with the thought that, at least, virtue was more lovely than sin; but after a while she began to be not quite so sure of that as she had been.

She was not a really wise or sensible woman; decidedly not, although she had always passed for gifted. She belonged to the order of women who never acquire intellectual standing-ground of their own, and whose capacity goes no further than to enable them to follow the leading of some energetic and able man, and so endow their existence with some of the agreeableness and charm derivable from interest in matters of literature and art. And, accordingly, in the midst of all this confused and confusing thinking of hers the poor girl yearned unconsciously for the sympathy and encouragement of some being stronger than herself and of higher powers.

---

SHE now gave regularly six lessons every week out-of-doors, at five francs a lesson. So she earned her hundred francs a month. The first money saved she sent home, with what joy and happiness cannot be told. The next thing was to fill up the gaps in her wardrobe. After she had got new clothes it was natural that she should seek some opportunity of putting them on and showing them. At last such opportunity came.

In the holidays there were no Sunday dances for the pupils. Nina, and Augusta, too, were able therefore to



have some of their Sundays for themselves to do as they pleased with.

Augusta Jaworsky showed Nina the wonders of Paris; the Louvre, the Cathedral of Notre Dame and the Morgue. And one day she suggested to her young countrywoman to accompany her to the Hotel Dronot. The effects of a celebrated Parisian courtesan, which were to be sold by auction the next day, were on view there.

When Nina presented herself to Augusta all equipped for their walk, the latter opened her eyes as widely as might be, and Nina read in those eyes a certain surprise.

"Do you mean to say that there's something wrong again with my dress?" asked Nina, with a shade of injured feeling.

She had been congratulating herself upon her get up.

"'Something wrong' is not the proper word at all," replied Augusta, shaking her big head.

"Then why do you look at me in such a singular way?" asked Nina, in some heat; "my costume has nothing so particularly striking about it."

She glanced over her shoulder at the looking-glass. And, truth to say, hat, jacket and frock were all alike of a quite, faultless simplicity.

"Oh, there's nothing particular to remark in the clothes, as such; only—only—well, the fact is, that you are again too tastefully dressed for your position."

Nina bit her upper lip.

"I'll remain at home," she exclaimed, and made for the door.

Augusta stood in her way and stopped her.

"Now, that is quite, quite silly. When you go out with me you can look just as aristocratic as you please; you'll only be taken for some princess who has got her maid with her as an escort."

So they went their way. It was toward the close of March; the first breath of spring warmed the air and relaxed the nerves. Even through the pavement, through the very asphalt, one might almost feel the feverish revival earth was undergoing in that season.

Nina had changed her style of doing her hair, had reso-



lutely, though with some heaviness at the heart, pushed those locks and curls away from her forehead. This did not make her one whit the less pretty, only a little less immediately remarkable.

One wanted a little longer time to take in the fact of her beauty; but when that was once done, that beauty was even yet more powerful in its working than it had been before.

Nina did not know that as yet; all she noticed was that she did not attract as much attention as formerly, and the thought caused her some vexation. It seemed to her as if everything and everybody was conspiring to spoil every little bit of pleasure she could find in her life.

When they reached the Hotel Drouot the extreme beauty of the belongings of the celebrated Mlle. Blanche d'Ivry interested her in a very high degree. She had never seen so many lovely and beautiful things gathered together in one place, except in the windows of the great shops on the boulevards. There was a table service of Sèvres china, with monogram in gold; an extremely valuable set of glass sparkling in a fairy-like way; articles of silver and gold in profusion; a few good modern pictures; several copies from old masters, with subjects, mostly, rather too warm and luxurious; a glass case full of brilliants and pearls—Blanche d'Ivry had cared only for the *white* style of ornament; a bedstead with Bernis-Martin decoration, the foot of which had a copy of Watteau's celebrated "Departure for Cythera," and on the bed itself lay, heaped up, clothes—velvet dresses, silk dresses, lace dresses. A particularly lovely pair of costumes, one of point d'Alençon on a pale-rose ground, and one embroidered with gold and pearls, were hung on the walls, spread out so as to show all their enticements to the best advantage.

Augusta Jaworsky went about among all these princely things with the same good-humored and phlegmatic indifference which she maintained right through all her doings and thinkings. She did not excite herself about that poor sinner, Blanche d'Ivry, and was neither dazzled nor disturbed by all this splendor acquired in such



a shamelessly repulsive way. In her view, it was all no more than an interesting little episode in contemporary Parisian history, and matter for newspaper copy. It was not long before she had calculated exactly of what length the article might be made and what fee might be expected for it. While so engaged she put questions, from time to time, to the usher in charge, or scribbled memoranda in a big notebook she had brought with her. And then she went up to Nina and imparted to her some of the more intimate knowledge of the details of the affair which she had just acquired from the functionary just mentioned.

“The glass set comes from the Duke of —; just look at the ducal crown so deeply engraved on it, and under them you’ll see the initials H. and B., belonging to the two names, Blanche and Henry. And this brilliant necklace was from the King of Holland. The story goes that it was this that caused the breach with Hortense Schneider. That fan was a present from the composer X. The D’Ivry was, in fact, an extremely intellectual person, though she came up from people in very small circumstances, and she was a good-natured creature, to boot. She contributed a good deal, they say, to the support and encouragement of young artists.”

Nina exclaimed with some violence:

“I can’t imagine what sort of artists they could be who let themselves be supported by her money! If one does but think how that money was gained!”

Augusta Jaworsky shrugged her shoulders and went on scribbling notes in her big pocketbook; and Nina went on working up herself against the sins of Blanche d’Ivry, and all the while making her eyes ache by looking and looking at the brilliancy of Blanche d’Ivry’s diamonds. She was as full as she could hold of that hateful sort of horror which some women, whose souls are built upon a scale of small respectability, show to sinners of their sex—a horror in which, if you look narrowly, you will find some trace of an envious grudge.

Curious people came in and out, principally men; a good many journalists, a few business men, and a few



young coxcombs—young gentlemen who might, perhaps, have belonged to the circle of Blanche d'Ivry's acquaintance. The ladies present were nearly all foreigners. There was a very lean Englishwoman in mourning, with a crape hat that kept wobbling all the time on her head, and holding a little daughter, who might be fourteen years old, perhaps, by the hand, and taking the girl from one wonderful thing to another, and, to all appearance, fascinated by all this dazzling devilry. There was a small, stout, short-haired woman, Irish—to judge by her costume—who took notes in a pocketbook exactly like Augusta Jaworsky. While this person was in the full fury of note-taking, she suddenly stopped short before the white dress embroidered with pearls, clinched her fist and said:

"You hussy!"

Nina was standing somewhat apart by herself before one of the pictures, when something happened that suddenly caused a change in her uncomfortable mood. She heard some one say in French behind her:

"There she is; *that* one, I mean—a beauty, if ever there was one. I've rarely seen one to compare with her; wait till she turns her head—and just look at her eyes."

Nina turned involuntarily, and not without a little feeling of envy, to look out for the beauty so highly extolled. Her glance fell upon a large man of dark complexion, who was staring at her with obtrusive admiration. Nearly all the men present followed his example.

She was exceedingly confused, but could not repress a feeling of high delight, too—a triumphant sense of power. Augusta Jaworsky came up to her.

"I have finished all I want to do, and am quite ready to go, if you are."

Nina left the hall with her. She held her head higher than ever; she felt as if she were walking on air.

"Just think of it," said Augusta, when they reached the street; "every penny these fine things bring at auction will go to the State."

"How is that?" asked Nina. "Had this famous beauty no relations?"



"Oh, yes; a brother in some small town or other—Dinan, if I am not mistaken."

"Is he in good circumstances?" asked Nina, somewhat sharply.

"No, quite the contrary; he is a poor locksmith with five children. But he has refused most positively to have anything whatever to do with his sister's belongings. Such things as that happen only in France; they would be incredible to our folks at home."

"The locksmith rejected all this wealth because he had never seen anything like it, and had not enough imagination to fancy anything like it," said Nina, with a somewhat sententious cynicism.

The words sounded to Augusta like a quotation. She said nothing, but observed her young companion rather uneasily, and then burst forth with a sigh of impatience:

"Did you notice it? Directly I lost sight of you, that very moment all the gentlemen present began to busy themselves with you and nothing else."

"Can I help that?" said Nina, loftily.

"I really don't know," replied Augusta, in a low voice. "At all events, you really must not dress yourself so well when you go out by yourself. I tell you again, you look altogether too distinguished."

"As though there were not heaps and heaps of distinguished American and English women who went out 'by themselves!'"

"True; true enough," said Augusta. "But it is not the same thing at all. You have not the neutral, indifferent bearing of an Englishwoman; people can see *you* observing that you are observed, and, what is more, people can see that it gives you something more than satisfaction."

Nina became as red as fire, and looked pained and wounded.

Augusta Jaworsky was as fond of her protégée as any old nurse might be, just as tender and nearly as irrational, and she could not bring herself to pass by Nina's ill humor without taking any notice or troubling herself about it. She could not help trying to cheer her up. .

"Well, you may be flattered, anyhow, with the con-



quest you've made to-day," she said. "Do you know who it was that admired you so obtrusively at the Hotel Drouot to-day? It was the sculptor, Tessendy."

Tessendy was one of the greatest celebrities of Paris. Nina was fairly giddy with triumphant vanity.

Augusta Jaworsky had not the least idea of the disturbance which she had so thoughtlessly caused in the young girl. It was the sort of feeling which she could not entertain herself, and therefore did not grasp the probability of.

When we divine too quickly that some sinful sentiment is actuating our neighbor it is usually because the germ, at least, of the same sort of sentiment lurks in our own soul.

"Do you know Tessendy?" asked Nina, with some effort, after a long pause.

"Yes; and he came up to me and asked me who you were, and wanted to be presented to you," replied Augusta.

"And why didn't you present him to me? I should have been really interested in knowing him!" said Nina, in commanding and somewhat vexed tones.

"That is quite possible; but I did not think it advisable. Tessendy is not the sort of acquaintance for young girls."

"You treat me as if I were a child in swaddling clothes," said Nina, somewhat violently. "I assure you, I know perfectly well how to keep a man within bounds, if he were to try to pass beyond them."

"I don't expect Tessendy would try anything of the sort with you; nothing of the kind," said Augusta.

Nina said no more, and fell into deep thought. Augusta suggested that they should walk a little longer on the boulevards, and have some slight refreshment at Boissier's. She, poor thing! felt herself richer than she was an hour ago in the consciousness of having a new article for a newspaper in her head. Besides, she never hesitated to spend a few modest coins when the idea of giving pleasure to anybody came in her head. She re-



quired so little for herself, so she always had something for other people.

Nina had a sweet tooth of her own; a lunch at Boissier's always was the greatest of pleasures to her. But this day, in spite of the repeated and hearty way in which her good-humored friend pressed things on her, she ate scarcely anything, and drank only a couple of glasses of iced orangeade.

During the night Augusta, who, wrapped in her gray military cloak and capped with her red turban was meditating on the opening sentences of her Hotel Drouot article, she heard, through the thin party wall separating her chamber from Nina's, violent sobbing. She listened to it a little while, shaking her wise head now and then, and looking at the pen which was idle in her hand, and then she laid the pen down and stepped into Nina's little room.

"Child, child, what does all this mean? Is this the old longing for home? The old longing, I suppose!" she exclaimed, seating herself on the edge of her protégée's bed. "I am sorry for you, dear, so sorry; but I am just a little angry with you, too. Don't sob so; don't, it breaks my heart. Now just think. You'd either better go straight back and try to make yourself useful at home; or, if you will drag on in this martyrdom which you have taken on yourself out of love for your folks, you must, you really must, try to bear it more courageously." Then, as Nina did not stop sobbing, Augusta went on in milder tones: "Now just think, only think, what a fine thing it will be when all this misery is over and you can really assist your dear ones with the fruits of your labors. How I should like to be there some evening when you return from your lessons to your mother and sisters, to that dear cozy home and those faithful souls, the lamp lit and everything nicely cleaned up, all the things set for an appetizing supper! Oh, dear me! if only there were such a delightful prospect open to poor me!"

"Delightful prospect! you call that!" said Nina, with inexpressible bitterness.

To this, however, Augusta Jaworsky did not reply at



all. For the first time, she was seriously dissatisfied with her favorite. She got up and left the room. She saw only too well that it was not longing for home that drew those tears from Nina.

When she was back in her little room, she growled out: "Well, I thank the dear, good Lord that He had no mind to send me into the world with a prettier face than the one I've got! A nice sort of gift, that beauty, I must say, when the only thing it does for you is to make you dissatisfied with everybody and everything!"

Then she wrote her article and made it ready to send off; after which she laid herself down and slept the sleep of the just.

But Nina sobbed the whole night through. Her good friend's words had only agitated, not at all tranquilized her. That, then, was to be her future! Such were to be her sources of satisfaction! To give lessons in the capital town of an Austrian province and fortify herself for the struggle every night with a ham sandwich, domestic chatter and a cup of tea! If she could ever have brought herself to believe that her only prospect in life was of *that* sort, she would have thrown herself out of the window that very moment and been done with it all!

The admiring glances of the great sculptor, the admiring glances of all the men at the Hotel Drouot came back to her.

She became feverishly excited, and fell then into dreamy reverie. Why was it that her destiny was incapable of taking some sharp and brilliant turn? Such things *did* happen!

---

ON their next free Sunday Nina asked Augusta to go with her to see the exhibition of pictures at the Salon. The good-tempered creature was ready enough to do it, all the more because she had a notion that the picture market would furnish her a fine field for extending her newspaper work.

The sight of so many works of art produced an overwhelming effect on Nina, who had never seen anything



of the kind. Like all the untaught public, her interest fastened itself on the subject of the pictures rather than on their technical merits. Augusta Jaworsky, who, during her sojourn in Paris, had become quite distinguished for her critical appreciation of painting, tried in vain to make Nina sensible of the special points and merits of the works that were conspicuously the best on the walls. But she seemed to have no sense of such differences at all. Besides, she was obviously agitated and unable to fix her mind on anything. She wandered in a restless way from one room to another, and presently declared that her eyes were positively aching with fatigue with all those violent colors, and that she would be glad to go below to the large and airy court, and sit down and rest awhile before the different pieces of sculpture.

Kind Augusta consented, and it did not for a moment occur to her what it was that drew Nina so powerfully away from the pictures and to the sculpture.

The little episode at the Hotel Drouot had quite gone out of her mind. It was only when she observed how restlessly Nina looked about in all directions until her eyes rested on Tessendy's work that Augusta began to put things together and understand.

Tessendy's work represented a Bacchante playing with a tiger; and difficult, indeed, it would be to determine which of the two was the more masterly creation, the woman or the brute. Nothing could be imagined more powerful and effective than the contrast between the proud, careless beast of prey, every muscle and limb in which was in repose, as if in conscious certainty that when they stirred they must conquer—and the woman; she, statue though she was, was all one mass of suppressed longing and feverish agitation; the very flesh on her arms, which were flung round the tiger's neck, told the story as, no less, did the smile on her mouth. And strange, indeed, was the contrast between the eyes of the two. The eyes of the brute were wide open, and its gaze was fixed, firm and cold. The woman's eyes were all but closed, and she was hardly gazing at anything exterior at all.



The group seemed to be full of a strange, mysterious, almost uncanny, sort of life.

And, to use the familiar expression, it was the "success of the year."

---

"A MASTERLY work, indeed," said Augusta Jaworsky, scribbling some hasty notes in her memorandum-book. There was quite a crowd round them; exclamations were heard like this: "There's go, if you like. I call that life itself. Why, the thing positively trembles and vibrates!" There were also peculiar cant words uttered, belonging to the Parisian slang vocabulary applied to art, which Nina did not quite understand. But she heard and understood enough to be more than usually excited, and, indeed, to go into a fit of dangerously high spirits. All of a sudden people stopped making remarks on the statue, and Nina caught words like these: "*There's a pretty one, if you like. Just look at her eyes. She knows what passion is!*"

"Come along, my dear child," cried Augusta, somewhat impatiently. Nina followed her.

"A particularly fine work of art, that!" said Nina, whose enthusiasm was of the ornate, half-silly order. Whenever she tried to put into words any impression which touched on regions beyond her thinking power her old-fashioned, merely sentimental and provincial education came at once to the surface.

"Yes, it is magnificent, indeed," assented Augusta. "The man is colossal, nothing less. The thing is evidently an allegory. I'm sorry for the pretty little Bacchante; one sees that she is going to be gobbled up by the beast before she knows where she is. Serves her right. What did she mean by coquetting with a tiger and showing off like that to him?"

As she spoke the words, she noticed that Nina changed color. She looked round. There, coming straight toward them, was Tessendy. Hanging on his arm there was a woman, large of frame, blonde, stamped with a



distinction that was unmistakable, although it was now only the ruins of its faded self.

He took off his hat. His glance rested for one fixed moment on Nina's face, and then he passed by them without stopping to accost Augusta Jaworsky.

"Who was that lady with him?" asked Nina.

"That thing? I am not quite sure, but I fancy it is the Marquise d'Orville, one of the many exaggerated and exaggerating creatures who run after him. He has been on too intimate terms with her for some time, they say."

Nina turned red. She knitted her brows and turned away her head.

That night she got no sleep. A thunder-storm was in the air and did not break. It was insupportably close in her little room.

At last she sprang up and opened the window. The perfume of the lilac, which was half-way in bloom, came up to her. A nightingale's song sobbed in the bushes, and, in the distance, growled the thunder and the never-resting movement of Paris.

Before she laid herself down again she went up to the looking-glass with the light in her hand. She loosened her hair and let it down in all its heavy splendor to roll over her bare shoulders. Yes, she *was* beautiful. How beautiful, indeed, she was!

And then there came suddenly upon her the burning desire that this beauty should be the object of some one's admiration, the instrument of some one's delight.

She put out the light—and crept, shivering, back into her poor bed. She was ashamed of the thought, ashamed of that desire; it seemed to her mere sin.

---

SIN—SIN! What, after all, did that word mean? Conscience, duty, obligation, were they, after all, anything more than hobgoblins to frighten humanity withal, weaknesses invented and kept up in poor humanity by the unnatural influences of Christianity and what was called "civilization?"



Surely human beings had a right to put out their hands and clutch at happiness and pleasure without the restraints imposed by traditional teaching?

Views of this kind had been seen—if thoughts so steeped in darkness ever *can* be said to be seen—again and again and again by the young girl in the printers' ink of the many novels the poor thing had devoured.

One Sunday she went with Augusta Jaworsky to a matinee at the Opera Comiqué. The piece was "Carmen." The Gypsy and her unscrupulous violation of every sort of morality seemed to have on her side all the warmth of the public's approval. When Michaela came on the stage a lady who sat close to Nina cried out to a young man:

"Ah! there's the good, respectable woman of the piece; and now we shall begin to be bored."

Augusta Jaworsky, who had heard this observation, as Nina did, laughed heartily at it. Nina nearly shed tears.

"What's the use of our giving ourselves all this pain and trouble about virtue when all people who have anything in them only make a mock of it, and think that it is mere miserable worry that brings in no return whatever!" she cried to Augusta, when the two were on their way back to Neuilly through the Boulevard Malesherbes.

"But, my dear child, my dear child, what you are saying is mere folly and madness!" cried Augusta. "Just you try to go the same way as that Carmen, and you'll soon see where it takes you."

"Oh, I dare say it wouldn't take me very far," replied Nina, warmly. "But the only reason why that is so is that my native energies, my proper share of courage and force, have been spoiled or lamed by the wretched circumstances of my life."

"It is not that at all. The real fact is that you stand upon a higher plane of moral development, and therefore you carry about with you, as every even moderately respectable human being does and must, a moral ideal which you do not perhaps quite realize at this moment,



but which would soon make itself felt and revenge itself terribly if you were ever to sin against it or offend it."

But Augusta overrated the young girl in attributing to her any such views or principles as that. Nina, unhappily, belonged to that type of woman whose conscience and moral feeling are roused into activity not so much by transgression itself as by its calamitous consequences.

---

At the end of June Augusta left the boarding-school. She had obtained a splendidly paid position in the family of some rich Americans, who were going to make a tour throughout Europe with her for a sort of guide and interpreter.

The evening before she left that establishment she had a long conversation with Nina, and implored her, if it was any way possible, to return home.

But Nina would not hear of such a thing.

So the excellent old maid took leave of her favorite with tears and many heartfelt caresses.

---

AND now Nina remained alone, without a prospect of cheer or counsel to support her. She was no longer conscious of any real desire to return home. The warm, fostering and petting atmosphere of that home was something which she seemed to herself to have outgrown. It would now have been too utterly restraining and confining to her spirit. In spite of all the privations and exertions imposed upon her by her Parisian life, she had come to prefer it to the monotonous peace of her mother's home.

The holidays began; Paris was empty.

One day Madame Giroux, the wife of the well-known carriage-builder, to whose children Nina gave pianoforte lessons, asked Nina whether she thought she could make up her mind to leave Paris and go for a couple of months into the country and undertake the task of teaching the



two little daughters of the sculptor Tessendy the piano. Nina showed herself so visibly startled at this proposal that Madame Giroux felt it needful to add some excuses and explanations.

“Oh, don’t be scandalized,” said she, in a good-humored way. “Tessendy has a bad reputation certainly; but his domestic life is quite correct, and his wife belongs to a distinguished family. Besides, you will see little of him personally. The country bores him, and he spends but little of his time with his family at their summer home; indeed, doesn’t even go there often.”

---

NINA accepted the offer. At the end [of July she repaired, with her scanty belongings, to Isle d’Avray, a little bit of a town on the Oise, where the summer home of the Tessendys was situate.

A little gray bit of a town it was, with very few inhabitants, but covering a good deal of ground, the houses standing widely apart on both banks of the Oise. The principal feature of the place was an islet in the river, which was connected with both banks by a picturesque old bridge with massive stone arches.

Mme. Tessendy and her two daughters came to the railroad station to meet Nina. The little girls were pretty, lively and dark complexioned, resembling their father. Mme. Tessendy was blonde, and must have been handsome at an earlier day. But now she had a tired and faded appearance, and her somewhat lovely face, with its sharply-cut features, was distorted by that embittered and hard expression often found in women who put up with humiliations inflicted by a husband as decorously as they may, but with constant inward revolt. She was something of an invalid, took no active interest in anything, and left all the housekeeping to a cousin of her husband, a somewhat elderly female whose inestimable qualifications, in Mme. Tessendy’s eyes, was the all but perfect absence of any and every sort of female charm. For, as Nina soon noticed, the sculptor’s wife was tor-



tured with jealousy nearly every moment of her life. And it did not escape Nina that her beauty acted as a painful surprise upon Mme. Tessendy. She could not avoid, therefore, some anxiety and apprehension lest she might be dismissed at short notice on some pretext or other. But it was quite the other way. Mme. Tessendy exhibited the most amicable and friendly kindness to her. There were two reasons for this. In the first place, the sculptor was not there. He was for the moment in London, whither he had been summoned to execute the bust of some royal personage; and in the second place, Mme. Tessendy was of decidedly aristocratic proclivities; and what principally determined her, when Mme. Giroux proposed Nina as pianoforte teacher for the two little girls, was her lineage, and, above all, her title.

---

AFTER she had got over her first feeling of disappointment at not meeting with Tessendy, Nina felt herself quite comfortable in her new position. Under the influence of the dreamy, half-awake routine life of the country town there came some alleviation of the fever which the fermenting atmosphere of Paris had kindled in her veins. Everything was enjoyment to her—the agreeable dwelling, the delicate table fare, the uniformly courteous and considerate behavior of everybody, the picturesque seclusion of the little gray town, set in its foliage of glimmering greenery.

Her duties were by no means exacting. They consisted in giving a couple of piano lessons to the two little girls every forenoon. For the rest, they all lounged away the time from lunch to dinner and from dinner to bed-time as best they might.

In the afternoon, on account of the oppressive heat, they generally sat in the large, cool salon on the ground-floor, the windows of which were hung with pale-green blinds. They did some tapestry work, read novels, or listened to the gossip of some neighbor who came on a visit.



On such occasions the news was stamped with a certain monotony. Monsieur Duval, the rich sugar refiner, had cancer in the stomach, and the report was brought each day, with due conscientiousness, of the articles of food he was permitted to take and how much of these he had been in a position to digest. Then there was Monsieur Rigaut, professor at the Lyceum, who had suddenly gone out of his mind and had had to be taken off to Paris, and who was just on the point of setting his house on fire when, very fortunately and at the last moment, they stopped his doing so. Then there was Madame Javalette, who had a new son-in-law in her mind, the only question being whether she could manage, by hook or crook, to scrape together the hundred thousand francs necessary for the round sum which ought to go to her daughter for dowry.

All these items of news interested Mme. Tessendy in the highest degree.

Only, after the door was fairly shut upon the visitor of the moment, she would shrug her shoulders and say of her :

“The worthy woman ! The poor, poor thing !”

After dinner they used to take a walk through the little town or in its delightful environs.

And a singular little town it was. Little houses, half-asleep, with their green shutters, grass growing in the pavement of the market-place, a church with a wonderful old Gothic porch, with modern wings to right and left of it, which looked like imbecile pasteboard. Thirty years earlier the church had been all but burned down. And the townsfolk had made the best of the matter they could. On the principal street was the post-office, where two brown automata, bearing a vague resemblance to female humanity, toiled and moiled from early to late, while a man with a deep-toned red countenance sat on a bench before the house-door reading the newspapers and smoking a pipe ; a baker's shop, where fresh cakes were baked regularly twice a week ; a whole street full of little villas, built by retired cooks, and known as “Turnspit Avenue,” every one of those tiny mansions having the



regulation little garden in front, with a little fountain and ornamental rock work, and a glass ball and the bust of the happy owner and tenant.

And, amid all this small modern grotesquerie, traces of a different and feudal past!

A noble avenue of chestnut trees, which had, earlier, belonged to a castle of which, years ago, some Condé, or Conti, had been proprietor. The castle had long ago been leveled to the ground, leaving not a trace of itself; and where it had stood was now a tavern, where, sometimes, there was wild work. It had the repute of being a den of thieves and socialists, and, only a little while before, an eminent murderer had been found and seized there—an event which flattered the pride of Isle d'Avray in an extreme degree.

On the island there was, situate in the middle of a charming park, a sometime abbey, which was now the property of a *danseuse* considerably advanced in life. In her day she had been both notorious and celebrated. In public she had danced before a whole pit full of kings, and in private she had made more than one royal personage dance exactly as she piped. And now she was only an old, shriveled bit of a thing, who, for lack of more extensive social circle, kept up a continual conversation with the little dog which she led about with a string, and who was glad enough when they let her pray quietly on Sunday in the darkest corner of the little church. For this was her only amusement now, and she was so glad to listen to the music, some andante of Beethoven or Mozart, played on a harmonium!

Nobody associated with her except the priest who had converted her, and to whom she gave much money for his poor.

Several artists spent their summer in Isle d'Avray. For the rest, the well-to-do inhabitants consisted of business people—tailors, shoemakers—who had made their fortunes, and who tried to get together art galleries, or practiced horticulture of the higher order, and who confined their social intercourse strictly within their own circle,



making no effort to visit with people of higher position and rise to it themselves.

The useful cousin-housekeeper had many relations with these families, and Mme. Tessendy consorted with them a good deal, to break the tedium of her existence; but she never failed to make them feel in some way the width of the social trench that divided them from herself. Her mother had been Lady-in-Waiting to the Empress Eugenié.

---

A TELEGRAM summoned Mme. Tessendy to her father at Vichy, who was on his death-bed.

Nina remained alone with the useful cousin and the two little girls.

It was strange! Her intercourse with this flat and conventional woman had produced upon her spirit something of the effect of a cold, wet compress. By the side of this dolt of a woman she had now learned to look on the world as average human creatures do habitually look upon it. The moral standing-ground of Mme. Tessendy, fortified on every side by conventionalities and prejudices, was a source of less danger to her than the intellectually higher ground occupied by Augusta Jaworsky. If the point of view of Mme. Tessendy in these things was too low, that of Augusta was, on the other hand, too high for Nina. For it opened up to the view abysses which it required the greatest possible moral steadiness of head not to turn giddy and fall into.

Mme. Tessendy had not been absent a couple of days before the old fevered sense of discomfort, the old inner habit of finding fault with things, of calling everything in question and longing for what was not, came up again in Nina's breast.

It was a close, sultry August night; the air was quite motionless, and filled with the mingled odors of the dust, dried leaves and withered roses.

Nina was restless. She could not persuade herself to go and lie down. She had begun a romance of George Sand, one in which the confused aspirations of a most



confused time were the principal and prominent feature of the book.

Augusta Jaworsky used to call this kind of book "poetic wish-wash." She cared only for those works of George Sand which she used to call "her fairy-tales," such as "Mauprat" and "La petite Fadette." Nina, on the other hand, had ravenously swallowed, just as soon as she could get hold of them, George Sand's wildest and most unveracious rhapsodies, like "Indiana," "Valentine" and "Lelia."

On this occasion it happened to be "Lelia" which she was brooding over. The excitement which the book produced in her became so unendurable that she laid the volume aside and began to walk up and down restlessly in her small chamber. At last she remained standing before the open window and looked out.

The moon rode high in a dark-blue sky, in which there glittered myriads of stars. Her light lay clear and sharp upon the white dust of the road which ran along the bank of the Oise, where the Tessendy's house was situate. It shimmered on the dark waters of the river, on the gray arches of the bridge, on the white facades of the houses of the little town which were asleep behind their shut green jalousies, on the outlines of the old abbey, which rose high over the crowns of dark chestnuts and limes on the island.

The soundless silence of the night was traversed by nothing except the cool rustling of the river's waters. Besides that, nothing—nothing.

Suddenly, the trees behaved as though a sort of shudder ran through them, a strong rustling of leaves became audible—and then all was silence. A footstep presently might be detected by the ear—the light, energetic footstep only a man could press the ground with; and there was the humming of a little song half aloud, a new little song of Massenet's which Nina knew well:

"How short is the hour  
In sweet love's bower!"

Into the clear, sharp moonlight there stepped forth a



man. He stopped at the Tessendy's house-door. A key turned in the lock—the man disappeared in the hall.

Nina's heart beat as though it would burst.

Next morning her little pupils informed her that papa had come home last night quite unexpectedly. He had dined at some chateau in the neighborhood and had come on foot to Isle d'Avray.

---

"I AM rejoiced to make your acquaintance," said the sculptor, holding out his hand to the young girl with a sort of paternal courtesy. It was just before dinner in the large salon on the ground-floor, the most agreeable feature of which was that it opened directly upon the garden. A glass door, always wide open when the weather was fine, led to the very slight flight of steps.

The sculptor had not appeared at the second breakfast; he had made them send a sandwich and a glass of Marsala to his studio. And it was all that Nina could do to contain herself in her impatience. At last she was with him—the great sculptor Tessendy, the "Don Juan" to whom no woman was sacred and whom none could resist. She had equipped herself with a firm and determined bearing; she had, so to say, buckled on all her armor. She had taken all her weapons of defense in her hand to parry any attack that might come—and lo! there was no attack at all.

The "Don Juan" was a large man of dark complexion, with a quiet, searching glance in eyes that were clear and seemed predacious with a sort of gypsy-like distinction pervading his decidedly handsome and faultlessly made person.

The hand which he held out to Nina was well-groomed, large, powerful and warm. Nina had a strange and peculiar sensation when she laid her hand in his. She felt herself elevated, agreeably excited, and yet alarmed. Instead of replying to his words of greeting, she made a slight bow and smiled shyly, a proceeding which became her extremely.

The strong, inquiring glance of the sculptor's eyes



softened, and his face took an expression of great kindness. Truth to say, when Nina behaved awkwardly her native charm seemed all the greater for it.

"I have already heard a great deal of you," said Tes-sendy.

"Ah—from whom?" asked Nina.

"From Mme. Giroux."

"What did Mme. Giroux say of me?"

There came upon the sculptor's face a smile just a little provocative.

"What did Mme. Giroux say of you? Why, that you had very fine manners, and that you played Chopin admirably. As to the first point, the case admits of no doubt; as to the second, I hope to have conviction carried to me after dinner."

"And pray how came you to discuss me with Mme. Giroux?" asked Nina, further.

He wrinkled his brows reflectively, in the sort of way people do when they try to recall things of comparatively little moment.

"How came I to do that? Let me see—ah! yes—it was a photograph of you which I saw somewhere about at her house, and which did not seem at all to belong to any face in worthy Mme. Giroux's circle of acquaintance."

"Mme. Giroux has always been very kind and good to me," replied Nina, with a somewhat accentuated, almost warning, reserve, as though deprecating the irony which lay in the tone in which he had spoken rather than in the words.

He looked at her keenly and closely. He was not at all accustomed to put up with anything resembling rebuke or rectification at the hands of young girls.

"Oh, to me, too," answered he, lightly. "She buys of me all the things that remain too long on hand in my shop; but that does not prevent me seeing that she is as vulgar as a woman well can be."

Then, turning abruptly away from Nina, he asked the useful cousin:

"Athenais, I say, why don't we go to dinner? I am scandalously hungry."



And as dinner seemed to be delayed for some little while longer, he played and joked with his two little girls without seeming to trouble himself any further with Nina.

And when dinner was over, not only did he keep aloof from her, but he did not appear disposed to put himself out of the way for her in the least. She had no use whatever for her defensive weapons. He stepped out among the roses of the garden and smoked a cigar.

Nina waited awhile and then sat down, unasked, to the piano. She played a few mazurkas of Chopin, then a highly sentimental waltz of Strauss, faultily as regards technique, but with that feeling for rhythm which seems to be in the blood of all Austrian women—above all, if they have a Polish father and a Moravian mother.

After a short time he came back to the salon and came nearer to listen. Her excitement imparted unusual warmth to her expression and rendering—and then, she did look so very charming when she played. Her head, which seemed, as it were, luminous, stood out with such all but magical relief from the faded blue-gray and green of the gobelin tapestry which covered the walls of the salon, the hand and arm which looked out from the folds of the lace-bordered, clear blue muslin, were a little masterpiece of creation.

The sculptor came nearer still to her. She let her hands fall in her lap and looked up to him. She had eyes, we know, of extraordinary beauty, and the look of reverent regard compounded with shyness which came up from them for an instant seemed to make her whole person quite bewitching.

“That was a very pretty thing which you just played—very pretty,” said he, leaning his elbow on the lid of the piano. “Very pretty. Was it Chopin?”

“No; the last was a valse of Strauss.”

“Ah! music which I call as insinuating as the Devil—the sort of music in which you see demons lying in wait to catch angels!”

Tessendy was never without some word of ready wit to show of what intellectual stuff he was made of.



Then followed a pause. Nina, in her vanity, would fain have risen to the height of the situation and shown herself as full of intellect and wit as he was! If she could but have had the least idea how very little it matters to a man of Tessendy's sort whether a pretty woman has intellect and wit or whether she has not!

At last she exclaimed:

"Do you know what I was thinking of when I was playing?"

"Well, what were you thinking of?"

"Of your Bacchante with the tiger," she cried.

"Indeed, indeed; h'm! h'm!" His eyes began to sparkle and he examined her more closely.

"You cannot think how much I admire the work!" she continued. "It is full of a sort of demoniac power; it is full of magic; it—it is—"

Enthusiasm of that kind, snapping, bird-like, at some expressions to get some vent for itself, he had encountered only too often. He smiled lightly at the agitated "little woman" who was hunting about for words to convince him of her excited and elevated admiration so superfluously. As to her excitement, that was obvious enough to him without any words. His understanding was as flawless glass in its keen perceptions; the cold understanding of a cynic, cold and incapable of being deflected by any softening of the soul—one whose illusions had all been utterly dispelled by the too pressing flatteries and followings of women.

The situation was perfectly clear to him. He saw a young woman whose poor circumstances would throw great impediments in the way of marriage. He saw her to be one whose disposition and education forbade the idea that she would, for any vulgar, practical end, give way to levity. On the other hand, he saw there an immense amount of passionate feeling and beauty not yet publicly recognized, vanity only too great, highly susceptible nerves, and very limited understanding. And, upon the whole, he concluded that she was one likely to be guilty of folly on a large and splendid scale; one, indeed, who regarded her own exaggerated feelings as a



sort of stock in trade; and who was, perhaps unconsciously to herself, highly desirous that the opportunity for such folly should present itself.

She roused his pity; but, at the same time, he could not help despising her a little.

She went on:

"I—I—really I was made almost ill by looking too much at that masterpiece of yours! It shook my inmost being. I—I—can hardly realize that the great artist who created that work is actually before me, the very man! Oh, how glorious it must be—to feel that one can do such great, great things, and to be able to enchant all human beings like that!"

"All human beings!" he repeated, in a dry tone. "That is a large way of putting it." Then, bending forward a little more to her, he added: "Human beings, taking them one and all, don't care one red cent for all my performances; and the noisy enthusiasm of that part of the public that does admire my works is just as much a matter of indifference to me as the spiteful proceedings of my fellow-artists who envy me. But what really does help and comfort me is to see enthusiasm for what I do coming in the shape of light from a couple of such beautiful eyes as yours."

He took her hand in his, allowed it to rest there a little while, and then pressed his lips upon it.

She was an Austrian woman, and therefore so much in the habit of witnessing that form of homage that she saw no harm in it, and did not take it amiss. On the contrary, she felt herself distinguished, and was proud of it.

He saw well enough what was passing in her mind, and let his eyes wander over her frame once again, from head to foot. Then he allowed her hand to slip from his.

"Do play a little more," he said, abruptly, as he turned away from the piano and went into the garden.

---

SHE certainly was a beautiful creature, and much to his taste. From the outset he had seen, even before they



came together, that she was only too accessible, and the perception of this fact kept his nerves quiet, and preserved whatever passion was rising in him from being either too agitated or too obtrusive. In fact, this accessibility of hers induced Tessendy to make some strong effort for self-restraint and to remain master of himself.

And there was this, too:—If her beauty fascinated and drew him, there was something else that kept him off. And this was the unmistakable marks of high lineage ineffaceably stamped upon every part of the girl's being—a certain atmosphere of hereditary respect and dignity surrounding her, incongruous with and in some sort keeping down her foolishly exaggerated feeling and speech.

However, this worked in two opposite ways. On the one hand, it heightened her attractions; on the other, it made a barrier difficult to pass. For the moment he was determined that the barrier should be respected.

---

NEXT morning his demeanor to Nina was polite, friendly, but he said very little, and, indeed, was somewhat cold. This "lasted" two, three days. The excitement in her, on the other hand, grew greater and greater, and became mingled with vexation. There was within her the sort of fever and ferment which enhances the brilliancy of the eyes and deepens the carnation of the lips. Every time he saw her she seemed to him lovelier and lovelier.

One day she came to him and asked whether he would not allow her to see his studio. He assented as kindly as might be. The same evening, when she was taking a walk with her two little charges on the bank of the Oise, he suddenly appeared, as though some spell of the twilight had produced him, at her side.

They seated themselves at the foot of one of the big willows that dipped their silvery branches in the stream—that is to say, she did; for he threw himself down a little way off on the thick, rich grass, while the children frolicked about and looked for flowers. He began to tell



her the story of his life, from its outset. How he had come to Paris, as poor and struggling a creature as well could be, but with a heart and soul filled with the deepest, most serious artistic purpose and idealist aspirations; how he had labored and labored until he made his mark and was—*where* he was; and how terrible a price he had paid for this success in the utter loss of his ideal, loss of his belief in human beings, in everything that had once been most sacred to him. Life to him was now, he told the girl, an empty, vain, desecrated thing; it was a horror to him to produce works for the adornment of churches from which their God had quite departed; and yet, even yet, the will-o'-the-wisp of the ideal had still such magic for him that he went after it like a crazy creature, if it came before him in any shape. And he yearned, oh, how he yearned, for sympathy—the warm sympathy of some woman who would shield him tenderly from the world, guard him from receiving the dreadful wounds it inflicted on him, from the degrading temptations in which it abounded!

He had a stock of phrases of this kind always on hand to draw on for the confusion and befoolment of women ready to lose their balance. He did not even take the trouble to invent anything fresh. The whole thing was to him a sort of formula of talk which had to be mechanically complied with and gone through.

And his knowledge of women was too keen and discriminating to permit of his taking the first steps toward any one of them without feeling perfectly sure that it only rested with himself to take as many more as he should choose.

Nina reminded him, shyly, of his wife.

He looked at her almost angrily in the fading light. And then said, with some roughness:

“My wife! You say that, although you are acquainted with her and know what she is! I don’t suppose you can really have failed to see what sort of sympathy I can reckon upon at all times in that quarter. Well, I’ll tell you. If ever I have any mischance to mention to her, she brings her high family to the front at once, and in-



forms me that her mother had been Lady-in-Waiting to the Empress Eugenié; and, if I have any success to announce, she asks how much money it is going to bring, and goes to order new costumes from Worth."

Nina was silent.

He frowned heavily; then, with a movement of vexation, shook himself up to his feet and walked away.

Her heart beat too wildly almost to be borne. Fever ran through her every fiber.

He had hardly gone twenty steps when she stood by him and placed her hand on his arm.

"Monsieur Tessendy, why are you angry with me?"

"Nay—angel that you are!" He shrugged his shoulders. "I am not angry with you at all; only, only—I had thought that I had before me a woman unlike her sex, with a heart as mature as high. And you are only a child—a very dear, lovable child, but still only a child! It was my hope that you would be able to enter into the cruel heaviness and bitterness of my lot, understand it, sympathize with it. Well, I was mistaken; I see it. I am sorry—but I do not take it amiss in you, believe me."

She put her hand upon his arm again.

"You do me injustice," she nearly sobbed. "I have understood you perfectly, understand it all. My heart bleeds for you, but what can I do to help you?"

"Well, just now what you can do is to put up with me as patiently as you can when I am with you," he murmured, drawing her hand to his lips. "And, indeed, there is something in your presence that is most healing and soothing to me."

He led her back to the willow tree under which they had taken their seats, and lay down on the grass a little nearer to her than before.

He rested his face on both hands and gazed up to her. She had taken off her little hat, and the children came dancing up with a wreath of wild flowers which they had just made. They placed it on her head.

"My God! how lovely she is!" cried the sculptor, as though speaking only to himself, and then he added: "If you wish really to be kind to me, sit to me for your bust.



Two or three sittings will be all I shall want; and then, at least, I shall have some memento to last me my life."

"If you wish it, I will, gladly, proudly," she replied.

All round them there was perfect, quite soundless silence. The children were tired out, and ceased their chatter. Under the pressure of the heavy-laden evening air the flowers in the meadow began to droop their heads to earth. Nothing was heard but the light sobbing of the river as it rustled on its ever-eager way to the sea.

---

It had to be: and it came suddenly—so suddenly!

Everything that she did for him she did with pride and joy.

She loved him very soon with mad passion, passion that seemed consecrated almost in her poor vision by the exaltation of its aim.

So deep was her illusion, so dark the bandage before her eyes, that she did not for one moment feel how low it was she was sinking as long as she could feel convinced that he, on his part, loved her. She felt herself lifted up above her kind—seemed greater to herself. As to what was to come further of it, she did not give it a thought. He loved her; that was enough!

She was beautiful, certainly, and her devotion flattered him; but his feeling for her, not too warm even at first, cooled momentarily; and then she began to tire and bore him. Unhappily, the situation was one which she could not grasp or understand; and her over-exalted views and feelings about him and their relations simply humiliated him.

The bust of her, which he set about modeling in brown clay, grew to be a masterpiece under his hand; and, in fact, it soon became very much more interesting to him than the original.

Did those about them really observe nothing of what was going on in the Villa Tessendy?

It is difficult to suppose so.

As for him, he kept himself well and firmly in hand;



but as to the girl, as is the case with most women when their feelings are very deeply engaged, it was quite otherwise. There was a fire and light in her eyes that told all too plainly of her passion.

One day when she was giving Tessendy a sitting for this too dangerous bust in the studio, his wife came in; and, with one quick glance, she took in the whole state of the affair.

And this led, without a moment's delay, to a rapid and radical change.

Certainly Mme. Tessendy did not raise any scandal; such a course was entirely repugnant to her aristocratic methods of procedure. Scenes likely to attract the attention of neighbors to the sore and wounded places of a marriage were, in her eyes, indecorous, or, as she expressed it, bad form. That sort of thing might pass with washerwomen, perhaps. But she took very strong ground on the point of keeping order in her own house. As to what went on outside of the house, to that she was comparatively indifferent.

And this time it was all the easier for her to have her own way as Tessendy offered little resistance.

She expressed a wish that he should leave Isle d'Avray next morning and return to Paris; and he complied. For the present Nina remained there with Mme. Tessendy. And Nina felt herself wretched and ashamed when in Mme. Tessendy's presence, just as though she had taken advantage of her absence to steal her jewels. She was, as might be expected, restless and racked with anxiety as to the future; but she was as far as possible from being prepared for what that future was really to bring.

With Mme. Tessendy it was quite different. Her manner to Nina was more formal than before, but not less polite. From one hour to another Nina looked with growing impatience for intelligence from Tessendy.

At last, on the third morning after his departure, she received a letter by the post, and saw that the address was in his handwriting.

All sorts of undefined hopes and expectations came crowding confusedly to her heart. He would want to fly



to Italy with her, at the least. He would divorce his wife, that he might be free to marry her. She would find in the letter words of the sweetest, tenderest comfort and consolation, words helping her to be patient, and entreating her not quite to forsake him.

Then suddenly—the letter had been handed to her when she was with the others at breakfast—she encountered Mme. Tessendy's glance, which was fastened upon her and seemed filled with a quiet and triumphant irony, almost of scorn.

Mme. Tessendy pushed her cruelty so far as to oblige Nina, on one pretext or another, to postpone the moment when she would at last be free to read the letter. First, she asked Nina pressingly to take a little walk with her; then she made her play some Chopin to her; and when Nina was engaged in playing, she actually put this question to the girl:

“Did you play much of Chopin to my husband? He is exceedingly fond of it.”

And while Nina put all possible constraint upon herself to answer as carelessly as possible, every pulse in head, hands, heart in her said: “She has guessed it all; she knows, she knows!”

At last Nina was allowed to go. She dashed to her room and locked herself in with the letter.

She read it twice before she could understand it; that is, before she would admit to herself that she did understand it, and that only too well. It was long before she could fully realize that there was nothing there except what had disclosed itself at the very first glance, nothing of what she could not help, poor creature, trying again and again to find; no expression was there of genuine passion, no assurance of any sort of tender feeling for herself. She read the letter through a third time: nothing, nothing!—not even some charitable, tranquilizing lie.

The sculptor merely and dryly gave her to understand that it would be far better for her, as for him, to put a stop seasonably and early to a relation which, if it were allowed to drag on further, would be nothing but a



source of pain to both; and then came something that sounded like excuses, and then something that looked like thanks—yes, actually and incredibly, *thanks!* And, by way of close, Tessendy begged Nina to regard herself as assured of his sincere and heartfelt friendship and “affection,” and to appeal to him always when he could be of service to her in any possible way.

At last she understood it all, but it took her some time. And then, for the first time, she saw what had befallen her, all that had happened, in its true light, and that it was humiliation and degradation.

The same evening she requested Mme. Tessendy to permit her to take her departure, which was granted with a stiff and dry assenting nod only.

---

NEXT morning Nina left Isle d’Avray. She did not return to Neuilly, to Mme. Legrand’s boarding-school. With all that pain at her heart she could not bear to be with any of these strangers. She took a room on the fifth floor of a modest apartment-house for the moment, and then proceeded to look out for a more fixed abode.

At last she found in the Rue Pasquier a niche which was in keeping with her means and all she could now pretend to. It was a chamber on the third floor of a furnished house, the people of which said that they were quite prepared to find her in board and at a very low price.

The matter of board was one that signified a good deal to her now, for she was so cowed down with shame that she could not bring herself to frequent any of those small restaurants where poor artists of her sex studying in Paris, and many female teachers settled there, are in the habit of taking their meals. She never went out of doors at all. All day long she sat on her bed with her face buried in the pillows and wept, and wept. She ate scarcely anything, lost flesh and became pitifully lean.

The waiter who came up every day to attend to her room—in furnished houses of the sort she was in, the



sleeping apartments are nearly always attended to by men—spoke quite paternally to her about it, advising her to try to pull herself a little together. Of course nobody could help seeing that mademoiselle had some great grief; but if mademoiselle would only try to think it, she had hardly any idea what heaps of trouble might be buried away in people's hearts and they be as fresh and merry as possible after the funeral was performed. And he sent up his wife, the cook of that establishment, to try and pacify her a little and force her to take something to eat.

At last she so far collected her energies as to repair to the Legrand school and inquire whether any letters had come for her and give them her new address.

She found a letter from her mother and a post-card from Augusta Jaworsky. Letter and post-card had both been to Isle d'Avray to try and find her, and both had been sent back, undelivered, to the boarding-school.

Her mother's letter she laid aside; Augusta's post-card she read at once. Augusta informed her that she and her Americans were for the moment stopping at the Grand Hotel, and that it would be a great pleasure to her to see Nina. She was to remain in Paris till the 1st of October, and then she and her party were to go, as fast as steam would take them, to Germany.

For a few minutes she hesitated as to whether she would seek Augusta at all. She could hardly make up her mind to let herself be seen by this old friend at all.

She dragged herself to her dwelling-place as well as her fatigue would let her, and there she read her mother's letter. There was not much in it; only love and tenderness, that was all. In earlier days Nina had not known how to value these aright; now she knew only too well, too well! She would have been thankful could she wrap herself wholly in this warm, protecting, sympathizing love and tenderness; but now, now every one of her mother's sweet, kind words, which would otherwise have done her such infinite good, went to her heart like the stroke of a dagger.

Well, well, life was a thing that had to be borne with,



dragged on to its end, one way or another. For a short space it seemed to her that she must leave everything just as it was and return home—only home. But that mood soon changed. Anything but that now! anything but that! Home, home? Never, never, never!

---

SHE began to look round her and to inquire about the people who were under the same roof with her.

The third floor, where she had found a resting-place for her feet, was divided into separate rooms, who changed their tenants nearly every day. The fourth floor was occupied by relatives of the people of the house. On the second there was a married couple from Brazil, the wife being afflicted with an incurable malady and not far from her death. On the first floor there were two women, highly rouged, with hair coming down almost to their very eyebrows. And, as Nina was informed by her friend the waiter, the furnished house belonged to one of these ladies, to whom it had been made over as a parting gift from some lover.

The white-haired woman who lived on the fourth floor with a half-witted husband was the mother of the two rouged personages; and likewise ostensible mistress and manager of the furnished house.

All these particulars Nina had from Francois one evening just before he left the house for good, having just had warning to leave, and that immediately, his offense being that he had just smashed a soup tureen.

At the same time, he intimated to Nina that, in his view, that house was not a suitable place for her to be putting up at, and strongly advised her to look out for something else.

Nina gave him a little present of money, and saw him and his wife depart with anything but a light heart. For those two were the only beings in Paris whom she could look on as her friends. As to his disclosures about the house, she did not give them a second thought. What right had she, indeed, to be fastidious? she, of all people!



Perhaps the truth was that it was not altogether so disagreeable to her that the people to whom the house belonged had no particular claims to respect; she need not feel any shame in *their* presence, at all events, who had sunk to a level so far, after all, beneath her own.

All her silly store of distorted and perverse doctrine died out of her the moment it might have been supposed serviceable in furnishing specious justifications for her breach of settled moral laws. Now, when, if ever, it might have been some comfort and consolation to her, it slipped from her utterly. She could find no excuses for herself; nay, she lost all the power of even trying to do so. She could not think at all consecutively; all thinking was mere pain and grief to her. All that she could now do was to drag out her life as patiently as might be from day to day.

She shrank to nothing in her own eyes, and was humbled, indeed.

Even her beauty seemed to leave her. She had loved Tessendy, loved him to madness; and in this flame, blazing up to the very skies, the earlier fires of her youth, so long kept within bounds, had been merged and all her earlier life had been burned out and burned away in this last wild outburst of passion. Not a spark of her late feelings could she now detect in herself. After she had once come to see in what light Tessendy really did regard the situation, there was no passage, no moment of the relations between herself and the sculptor which she did not look back upon with sheer horror.

It became every day more and more difficult for her to have anything to do with human beings at all. Little by little she spent the small savings which she had been able to put by when with Mme. Legrand. And day after day she postponed knocking at the door of any of her former pupils to ask whether she could not begin her lessons with them again. She fancied that her shame must be written on her very face, and that she would be driven away from every threshold she should dare to attempt to cross.

Then, suddenly, she came across Mme. Giroux in the



street, when, one evening, she had gone out for some small necessary matter.

"You here, my dear child!" cried the coach-builder's wife. "Why, I thought you were back in Austria long ago."

"No—I—I—" stammered Nina, and could not bring out another word. Happily, the loquacity of Mme. Giroux, which knew no bounds, saved her the trouble of saying more.

"I was told that you were back in Austria, told by—by—now, who *was* it that told me? Why, Tessendy, of course; no other than Tessendy. I don't see anything of the ladies of his family, of course; the idea of such a thing—a simple tradesman's wife like me! But, all the same, one knows pretty well how old Debray made all that fortune. That was Mme. Tessendy's grandfather; but that's neither here nor there. Tessendy told me that you and his wife did not get on together at all, and that she did not behave prettily to you. Jealous, *I* dare say—that's like her all over. We all know what *she* is. The truth is, that I was sorry I recommended you to her after it was too late. Well, it was an unpleasant experience for you; but, at all events, it's over. I am delighted to have got hold of you now. How delighted the girls will be! Come to-morrow and breakfast with us, and then we'll have a good talk about the lessons."

While the good-natured soul went on with her chatter, she still held Nina's small hand in her thick lump of a paw. In other days the poor woman's vulgarity had always kept Nina in a state of reserve; but now she could see nothing but the real goodness of heart, and she drew the thick "paw" to her lips.

"Dear, dear, dear! My poor child!" exclaimed madame. "Why, you are crying; I am afraid that you've been badly trifled with—badly treated, perhaps! Mind, you come to-morrow and spend the whole day; we'll try to amuse you and shake you up a bit. Adieu; there comes my omnibus. Mind, to-morrow!"

Madame Giroux, like many well-to-do people in Paris, was very strict about her omnibus. Getting hold of that



vehicle at the right time, and taking the right one for the right place, was almost part of her system of religion ; there was nothing of which she was more careful.

---

NINA lay nearly all night awake in her bed, with its blue woolen, musty-smelling curtains drawn all round to hide her better from the world ; and she sobbed and cried and her teeth chattered with feverish cold. Conscience, blunted for a while, came to life again, and did its work upon her with tenfold intensity and sharpness. Had she any right now to mix herself up with the family life of these good, honorable people? After what had happened, ought she to allow herself to be pitied as though she had had wrong done to her, she who had so bitterly sinned against others?

What was she to do? What *was* she to do? If she was to live respectably among her kind at all, she could not help lying, in word or in deed ; and, if she cried out her shame from the roof-tops for all the world to hear, what would be left to her but to pass her life among creatures to whom such a thing as had befallen her was a mere every-day matter ; or, to sever herself from her fellow-creatures altogether and seek refuge in the cloister.

Both these alternatives made her shudder. Death would be far preferable ; yet, bitter as her life had been made for her, she could not induce herself to bring it willfully to a premature end.

The only thing that seemed left to her was to lie—to lie as best she could, and take upon her shoulders the oppressive burden of the respect and esteem which she no longer deserved.

---

MME. GIROUX took her under her kind charge in every possible way, loaded her with presents, all but entirely supported her, procured for her another dwelling and a great many pupils.



Nina soon gave eight or nine lessons a day. And, as she had now no pretensions or desires for herself, she was able to save a good deal of money.

One day she sent quite a considerable sum home. And she found some pleasure, at last, in doing so. And something like tranquillity came into her spirit; a sort of half-sleep took hold of her so disturbed soul. She now stopped her reading altogether. Her days were spent in going from one lesson to another; and when time allowed, she saved even the omnibus money. When night came, she mended and patched her clothes.

---

ALL might have gone well, were it not that her health began to get worse every day. She thought that her tired feeling and frequent attacks of giddiness were due to poverty of blood, and tried to take iron.

She looked out with no little anxiety for her mother's answer to her money remittance. It was two days later in coming than she expected. When it did come, it was so full of heartfelt love, and, besides, contained such good news, that she was affected to tears.

"My dear, dear child," wrote her mother, "the post has just brought me the two hundred francs you sent us. Oh, you silly, sweet thing! How you must have put yourself about and worried yourself to get the money together! I have cried over it and kissed it again and again. Dear creature, good, dear thing! I am not in want of your poor, dear little savings, God be thanked! And I've put it away for yourself, just as I used to do, if I any ways could, with the starvation pennies of the boys, which I always used to lay up for the purpose of making them some big present which they least expected.

"There is, however, some 'unexpected outlay' that has to be made for an unexpected gift; but the occasion of it doesn't need waiting for or seeking at all. Think of it, dear. Rosie is going to be married. Fred Kaden—he is in the Montebello Hussars—proposed for her the day before yesterday. He has not very much of his own; but



there is an uncle with property, whose heir he is to be, and who says he is ready to give the usual guarantee or security \* to the War Office for our Rosie. As it is quite a nice match, Aunt Betty is going to furnish Rosie her trousseau. You can imagine what a state of delight we are all in. The children send you all imaginable messages. They are sitting at this moment on the sofa under the 'crinoline bush'—as our mocking-bird Jack used to call it. They've got hold of one another's hands, and are telling each other for the tenth time that they have been fond of one another for five years, and that the only thing that has held them back was the fear that they might make their hearts still sorer than they were, and other peoples' hearts, too. And the very moment one's back is turned, one hears a kiss. Fred is just honestly and straightforwardly silly. Rosie pretends to be a little more rational, but it's only pretense.

"And now you'll be able to see pretty clearly the use to which your savings will have to be put, dear. Just this: to pay the expenses of your journey home and to dress you up as prettily as may be for the wedding. For pretty you shall be. And that will come easily to you; you were always our Beauty, my darling! Bring something nice with you from Paris—I—oh, well, I never could keep anything from you! I have something under way for *you*, quite, *quite* specially important. You guess what it is at once, you clever thing, don't you?

"The wedding is to be at the end of January or the beginning of February; the day not yet fixed. If you want to please us, come home for Christmas, and we'll all light up the Christmas tree together. The boys will be able to get all necessary leave. And if my plan succeeds, then—you won't be able to leave us any more.

"If that is not to be, and you are determined not to give up the independent position you've made in Paris, I shall make *my* way thither to you and do your house-

---

\* In the Austrian army officers who marry are required to give security that they will not leave a family unprotected for.



keeping for you, and cut and cook and spend my little income with you. But, first and foremost, do come home, and that soon, soon, soon! When we once have you with us, we'll see to all the rest of it.

"Fred asks if we are not going to have supper soon. He's always hungry, but the most unpretending creature! I must go to the kitchen. With a thousand kisses, thine own true  
MOTHER."

Tears fell from Nina's eyes upon the letter, many, bitter tears.

It was morning, and, when this letter came, she was about to put on her things in order to go to her daily lessons. What should she do? She had become inured to the false position in which her life found itself—a position forced, false, artificial, forever excluding disclosure of the very truth. And whether this burden of falsehood, or, to put it as mildly as might be, insincerity, was dragged on through life in one place or another place, what difference could that make to her now? All joy, all delight had died out of her heart forever; and what she had to see to now was that she should not mar the pleasure of others. She smiled a melancholy smile at her mother's transparently simple plan and her wish that her child should be more than usually pretty for the wedding; and as she smiled her tears fell all the faster. All that was over, she said to herself—over forever; but she *must* go home for the wedding, at all events. As to what was to happen after, whether she was to remain in Paris or seek for some field of work in Austria, all that might be settled thereafter.

Meantime, she needed to make haste not to be too late with her lessons. Her breakfast was there, but she had not touched it. Indeed, the very sight of food had for some days caused her nothing but disgust. When she was just going to slip on her waterproof cloak, the one which she usually wore in the street—the time when she made herself as fine as might be for the very shortest walk out of doors seemed long enough ago now—she observed that the window panes were all glittering with frost. She put the cloak away and took out of her trunk



a fur jacket she had there, which she had brought from Austria and had worn all through the previous winter.

She tried in vain to bring the buttons together. There could be no doubt about it; it was now much too small for her.

For a moment or two she smiled in a melancholy way at this. "Can it really be possible that with all I have been going through, I can have been growing stouter?" she asked herself.

She threw a glance at herself in the mirror, a thing she had not done for a long time, and she almost recoiled at what she saw. At first, it seemed to her as though she had some other person before her; she could scarcely recognize herself. Was that really Nina? Everything about her seemed twisted out of place, her face was yellow and her features distorted. At one dreadful moment even before this she had suddenly been struck with anguish and alarm. She had persuaded herself it could *not* be so—and now!

A cold shudder ran through her frame, and she turned giddy; she felt as though she must faint. With all the strength left to her she dragged herself to the door, turned the key, and then sank down all of a heap. And when she came a little to herself, then, indeed, did it seem to her as though reality, in its most terrible form, seized her by the hair and dragged her violently out of the regions of dreamy pain she had so long traversed to suffer things worse than ever.

What now?

One possibility, one course of action after another came up in her mind, and she weighed them all carefully and patiently and with a clearness of perception she had never before commanded. One only course she dismissed from her mind at once, which would have been the first to be adopted by base souls in her position, and that was to have recourse to Tessendy. She was not long in forming her final resolution.

There was but one possible and practicable issue—suicide! Of this she could have no manner of doubt. It must be so; she told herself so in a quiet, stern, inexora-



ble manner. Death was a horror to her, but under the circumstances it was the only course open to her.

One thing only: it should not be before her sister's wedding. She would not throw such a deep shadow of grief over her loved ones.

As things stood, it was clearly out of the question that she should be present at her sister's marriage. But, to ward off suspicion, she determined to let it appear till the latest moment as though her purpose of joining them at the wedding were quite fixed; and then she would telegraph some insignificant pretext—a sprained foot or the like—anything which might serve to show that she could not possibly travel. And then—then!

It must be so; it must! No doubt was possible. It must!

That day she could not muster up strength enough to go out and give her lessons.

---

DAYS, weeks slipped on; days and weeks during which the thought of the self-murder she meditated never left her save for a very short interval; days when she was continually tortured by the idea that some one or other would divine her misfortune; days when letters came from home, each, from her mother and sister, filled with increasingly strong words of tenderness and love, and with more and more pressing entreaties to her to come home to them. And these letters seemed to embody in a sort of concrete shape all the deep happiness of her home; they seemed to carry with them the very stamp and image of the family life, so full of protection if so narrow, she had formerly despised. They seemed odorous with the perfume of a purity, severe, even stern, and yet of childlike unconsciousness and simplicity.

She replied to all these letters—but, Heavenly Father! how dreadful was the task! Always to have to be devising some new prevarication, one lie after another.

Meantime, she set about thinking over plans of executing her dreadful purpose. In what way could she rid



herself of her hated life so as to bring the least shame and discredit to her family?

And so it came about that, at last, she sank into a sort of apathy. But there was one thought that blazed up fiercely and with mad passion in her too often; and that was hatred for the burden which was crushing her to earth and driving her on to death.

And the more tender she felt herself grow to the loved ones at home the harder and more cruel became that awful hatred.

Thanks be to God, it was coming to its end! The day was fixed; the wedding was to be the 25th of January. During all these latest weeks Nina, in spite of her poor health, had not omitted a single lesson, and was in consequence cruelly tired and worn.

She forced herself, with some difficulty, to go to the big store, "the Louvre," to try and find some sort of handsome white material for her sister's wedding dress. She bought a very beautiful white silk, and a wreath of myrtle as well.

Well, well! *That* was thought over and done with! And the thought had been pleasant to her, even in the midst of her cold, fixed despair. How well she could realize her sister's delight when this present came to her; the delight of all of them. And that, too, was over now. She wrote home saying that she should arrive almost as soon as the dress, and that she had sent it on a little before coming herself to give Rosie time to make herself as fine as possible with it.

Then, a few more days; and at last, on the 23d of January, she telegraphed to them:

"Have broken my arm: journey impossible: well taken care of: remember me! NINA."

After all this had been seen to, she began quietly to prepare what was necessary for the execution of her final purpose.

She had procured some poison by some cunning, circuitous device—a small quantity of strychnia. She was determined not to destroy herself in Paris, where she was



known, and where, in consequence, her poor corpse might be ruthlessly and shamefully discussed and written about. No! It was her plan to leave Paris and stop a few stations down one of the railroads. She would select some quite strange town and take another name; and there, in some little hotel or other, she would do—what she was forced to do.

But, first of all, she purposed writing to her mother a letter in these terms:

“Forbear to seek me. On this earth I am to be found no more!”

“And, and”—so she said to herself—“if, after all, they do come to know *where* it was that the poor creature took her own life and breathed her last breath, and *why* she destroyed herself, they will at least be able to divine how terribly deep was my shame, and how careful I was to spare them all the disgrace I could. And perhaps they will forgive.”

The twenty-fifth had come and gone. She had sent one more telegram:

“Most heartfelt congratulations to the young couple.”

And now the appointed time was come. But, at the last moment, her purpose frightened her. She put off its execution from one day to another.

She had discontinued her lessons, giving as her reason that she was going to Austria to her sister's wedding. She was without occupation, except that of brooding continually over what she had determined upon, what *must* be. And she became at last possessed, even to craziness, by the horror of death—a horror in which there was something of the coldness of death itself, and in which there lived one warm spot only, and that was hatred for the burden—the horrible, ghastly burden, which was thrusting her out of life; and this hatred tore her more and more.

But it must be; it must!

It was quite early morning, and she was about to leave the house. She had packed her small satchel; she had written the letter to her mother. The letter lay by the



small package containing the strychnine on the table. She was going to take both with her when she went to the station—the letter to be posted, the poison to be kept carefully in her bosom till. . . .

It was six o'clock. A light was burning on her table. Restless almost to madness, she had been unable to remain in bed, and had risen so early to finish all she had to do before leaving; and now she felt herself quite exhausted. Nearly two hours had yet to pass before going to the station.

She laid herself down once more on her bed, leaving the candles alight. She had always been afraid of the dark. Poor Nina!

She could not keep her eyes open—and—all of a sudden she was shaken from the sleep that fell on her by a noise—the rolling of a carriage—painfully audible in the deathlike morning silence. It stopped below on the street, before the house, almost under her very windows.

She raised herself half upright with difficulty, and trembling with fright. A terrible thought started into her mind.

Yes; there *was* a ring at the door below—then—the mingling of voices—and then, *now*, silence. There were footsteps on the stairs; footsteps of a man carrying something heavy, and other footsteps which sounded more lightly; and they stopped at Nina's door.

"It's here, madame," she heard the porter say. Then there was a ring at her door, and a soft, tender voice cried, amid tears and laughter:

"Nina! Nina!"

God in Heaven! It was her mother's voice!

Another moment, and they were standing face to face—the mother, with outstretched arms, all delight, hope, expectation; her daughter, the very image of anguish and terror!

The porter asked if he could do anything more for the ladies. He saw that he was not wanted for anything further, so he put down the satchel and plaid shawl of the elder lady on the ground and withdrew. Mother and daughter were alone.



The mother's arms had fallen at once; she had not clasped her child to her heart. The feeling that something was wrong, that some terrible, pitiable misfortune had happened, came over her at once; but what it could be was all dark to her. She did not understand; she could not understand. There was only one thing plain to her, that it gave Nina no pleasure to see her. But how *could* this be? *Why* was it so with the girl? "Had the girl become estranged from her in so short a time as that, barely a year?" she asked herself. The mere thought cut her to the heart.

She stepped forward into the small circle of light, with which the scanty flames of the candle on the table broke up a little of the darkness, and threw a searching glance on Nina. The light was very poor, and the girl's face was all disfigured by tears, and the mother could discover nothing of the clear, firm, well-known outlines of her daughter's form. Was this Nina? Could this be Nina?

"Which arm is it?" she asked at length, in a voice that told only too plainly how deeply wounded and humiliated she was—how glad she would be to creep away and hide herself anywhere.

Nina at first did not understand her.

"Why, you telegraphed us that you had broken your arm!" murmured the mother.

"Yes, that is so; that is so!" stammered Nina, with her hand on her forehead. "I thought that would frighten you less than if I wrote the truth. There is nothing the matter with my arm. The fact is, I fell very ill all of a sudden; I thought it was typhus, and that would have alarmed you all too much!"

"Oh, that was it. You were not in the habit of telling lies before you left me," replied the old baroness, and her voice now sounded almost hard. She stood and stood before the daughter, tall, upright, in her black traveling cloak, with the gray hair brushed back from the low forehead and her handsome, well-preserved face; and she kept her eyes steadily fixed on Nina—upon this almost unknown, strange, singular creature, in whom she did her best to find her daughter. In vain, in vain!



"I did it only for your sakes—I thought it would be best for you. But take off your things, mother; I will make you some tea."

"I have no wish to take off my things; what I should like best would be to turn back and not stay one moment here!" cried the mother. The poor thing had traveled all night, and was filled with fatigue and shame.

Why, why was Nina so cold? She had with such joy anticipated Nina's joy at seeing her. Her whole soul was seized with keen longing for some slight signs of heart, *some* tenderness. A longing for home took hold of the old lady and shook her fiercely in these strange, dreadful surroundings, among which her own child was the strangest and most dreadful surprise of all. She sat down, but only because she was quite unable to stand any longer.

Nina came forward to take her hat and cloak. She thrust the daughter away from her almost with violence.

"Oh, for God's sake, don't touch me! I don't want your services. Girl, do you know, or don't you, that you haven't given me a single kiss to show that you are glad I'm here?"

And Nina pressed her ice-cold lips on the mother's forehead, but the poor thing tried to put her away, saying, in pitiable tones:

"Oh, you'll never be able to make up for it—never, never! There am I, traveling to you night and day; the young people had hardly left before I was in the train. There am I, with my head full of this and that anxious thought for you, and nothing else; thinking all through it how delighted I'm going to be to sit at your bedside, and be able to pet and spoil you as I used to; thinking all the time, 'Poor Nina! poor, dear Nina! what eyes she will make when she sees me.' Yes—and what your eyes *did* say when I came I shall never, never, never forget! The boys were right; they said, bluntly, that you were making excuses so as not to come to the wedding, that you did not care a jot for our innocent pleasure and happiness; it was all too small and humble for you. Quite right they were, quite! Oh, my God! I wish I was at



home again. Not one single night will I remain. I will travel back this very night, only I must have a shelter with you till I go."

Nina answered not one word; and, as something *must* be done in the midst of her pain, she set about lighting the fire. Her mother had sunk down by the fireplace into the only easy-chair there was in the little room. Nina put the kettle on the fire, and sat cowering before it and gazing into the flames. And then she suddenly took hold of her mother's hand, and kissed it again and again. The mother took her hand away sharply, yet a change came over her almost directly.

After a slight pause, she said:

"I've brought you something nice from the wedding—those little almond cakes you're so fond of; but I suppose all that is nothing to you now."

And as Nina got up and began to look about among the luggage, the mother added:

"There, in the little basket!" Then she began to make little sounds of pain and impatience, clinched her hand convulsively, and pressed the knuckles against her teeth.

The flame of the miserable composite candle became redder and redder, then paler and paler. It was hardly visible. It was full daylight.

And then the whole miserable, poverty-stricken look of the little room Nina dwelt in was fully disclosed to the mother. She saw with amazement the wornout covers of the furniture, the threadbare carpet, which covered only a portion of the floor. How small it all was, and how low the ceiling! Suddenly, something caught the mother's eye which startled her excessively. On the table there lay a letter, and beside that letter a small package engraved with a death's head and cross-bones. That was poison—strychnine!

Nina was busied behind her back with unpacking. Her mother's breath almost stopped! She rose from her chair.

"Nina!" said she, slowly. "Nina, come here!"

Then Nina knew that the dreaded moment was come. To try and put it off would be useless, quite useless. Way



of escape there was none—none. She rose slowly and came toward her mother.

She was carelessly clad; her dress was without any of the devices with which she had so painfully and carefully concealed the alteration of her figure. She trembled in every limb, and her head sank lower and lower. What would her mother say; what would her mother do?

The mother took hold of her daughter's two hands, examined her from head to foot long and carefully. Then, with a hoarse, terrible, half-stifled cry of anguish, she let go of Nina, turned her face away from her child, and covered her face with her hands.

For awhile the silence was unbroken by a single sound.

Nina stood rooted to the spot as if turned into stone.

Suddenly, the mother turned and faced her.

What would the mother do? what would the mother say?

Her mother stepped to the table, took the little packet of strychnine and threw it into the fire. Then she opened wide her arms and drew her daughter to her breast.

"My child!" she sobbed, "my poor, unhappy child!"

She did not put one word of question as to *who* it was or *how* it had happened. There would be time enough for that.

---

AFTER the first dreadful moment was over Nina's spirit felt greatly lightened.

Instead of reproaching or accusing her, the mother took all the fault upon herself.

"I ought not to have let you come to this dreadful place all by yourself; I ought not to have given in to your going from home," said she, again and again. Then she reflected upon what was to be done. And she, who had never uttered a single lie her whole life long, set about weaving a whole network of lies to protect her child.

It was in favor of Nina now that she had stopped all her relations with her pupils. As to returning to Austria with her, the mother could not possibly do that. So much



was clear; but she and her child could both disappear from the world together.

She withdrew with Nina to a little place in the neighborhood of Paris. And she spent several months with her unhappy girl there. They took other names, and lived in two rooms which they hired from a woman who sold vegetables. All their letters were directed to the post-office. The baroness wrote to Austria to the effect that Nina's health was so poor that they had had to leave Paris. This was easily seen through by their relatives at home; but, at all events, Nina's position was made secure as far as the world at large was concerned. She would be in a position to resume her work—as soon as—as soon . . . . .

All day long they sat in their little room and waited, as best they might, for that which came nearer and nearer. No word concerning it ever crossed their lips; but they saw clearly enough in each other's face that it was the only thing in their thoughts. The mother aged rapidly in those few months—her hair turned white almost visibly. Before this last terrible blow she had gone through life, in spite of all her trouble and work, upright as an arrow; now her shoulders were bowed and her gait uncertain.

On the daughter's face there came, now and again, when she sat there dumb, too tired or too listless to busy herself with the usual needlework, an expression of hardened gloom.

But she never spoke one word of what passed within her. All the feeling she was now capable of became concentrated upon hatred for the burden which she bore about with her, and which weighed more and more heavily on her soul as the time went on. One thought only possessed her; if only *it* would come into the world dead, dead!

---

At last: at last! And it was in the early hours of a sultry June morning—after a terrible night!

There came to Nina's ears a small whimpering sound,



pitiful, almost ridiculous; something like the cry of a young kitten.

Something like fright—almost wrath—came over her. The child was alive. . . .

The mother came up to her bed; she had something in her arms looking quite rosy, and wrapped up in white stuff.

“Don’t you want to have a look at your child? It’s a girl, and as pretty as can be,” said she, sadly, in half tones, and with a new tenderness in her voice.

But, for all answer, Nina turned her face to the wall.

---

THE child was put out to nurse in a peasant’s family, not far from Paris.

Nina returned with her mother to the city. They hired a little apartment in the Rue Taitbout, and took all their meals at home. The porter’s wife attended to all the rougher part of their housekeeping work.

The mother’s little income relieved them from anxiety as to their livelihood, but not much more. Nina continued to give her lessons. The presence of her mother made her position more satisfactory in the world’s eyes, and people placed more confidence in her than before. She was able to raise the price of her tuition, and soon had every hour of the day occupied. She worked from early morning to late night, as long as she could stand on her feet.

But between her and her mother the state of things was not satisfactory. There was little expansion, and, indeed, their relations were somewhat strained. There was a grave something between them which they could not bring themselves to speak about; and the knowledge that it was on the minds of both made the presence of each a restraint to the other.

Joy, now, found no opening—no, not the least cranny—through which it could creep into that sad little household—home it could not be called. And as to grief, all



the issues from which it might escape were closed up. None was open—no, not one.

As each month came round Nina handed to her mother in a little packet the sum required for the child's support. But she never looked in her mother's face when she did this, and never uttered one word.

And so more than a year went by from the moment when Nina first heard that poor little, whimpering cry of her child.

It was the middle of June; some of her pupils had already left for the country.

About six o'clock in the afternoon, somewhat earlier than usual, she returned home. It had crossed her recollection that it was the anniversary of her mother's baptism. She stopped on her way to buy a wreath of roses and a little basket of strawberries—her mother's favorite flowers and fruit.

When Nina reached her home her mother was absent. That was a thing that had not happened since she and her mother had lived together in Paris. The porter's wife told her that the baroness had left word that mademoiselle was not to be anxious if she arrived home first. Madame had some commissions that must be attended to at once. She would be back by supper-time.

"Commissions! that must be attended to!" said Nina to herself. "What in the world can that be? Likely enough something for somebody at home." And then she added: "And, alas! she is not likely to speak to me about such a thing as that."

She sighed, and gave the strawberries to the portress, arranged the roses in a vase, and seated herself by the empty fireplace, which now had the iron cover drawn over it.

And, in fact, the mother had for some time now left off reading to Nina the letters that came from home.

Nina herself now never had any letter from her relatives, and never wrote one to her brothers and sister.

There she lay back in the easy-chair, with her empty hands in her lap, tired out, immovable, alone. The manifold noises of Paris, enjoying its high spring-tide,



reached even their sequestered street; and a little of the light of the sun still lingered on the threadbare carpet at her feet.

The house was very tall, and stood on ground somewhat high, and was as yet not wholly wrapped in darkness.

The little time-piece on the mantel struck one quarter after another. The portress had laid the table now for some time; yet her mother came not.

At last a ring was heard at the door. The portress opened, and the baroness appeared. It was plain that she had hurried herself extremely not to keep Nina waiting. Her hat was all awry, her dress was in anything but its usual order; but her eyes were sparkling with animation, her cheeks glowed, her lips were smiling. All her person seemed as though it had been warming itself at some private and peculiar sunlight reserved for her and for her alone.

She had in her hand a big wreath of wildflowers, and a breath of fresh country air seemed to come from the old lady and everything she had on.

Nina divined at once where her mother had been; and a bad, angry feeling rose in her breast.

"Have I kept you waiting?" asked her mother, sweetly, and in tones fresher and more cheerful than usual, tones which Nina had not heard for a long time, and which sounded like an echo from the old happy days.

"I—I have been on a little excursion into the country. I've been to St. Eusébe to—to—well, just to have a look at the little one. It came to my mind early this morning that it was the child's name-day." (The little one had, in fact, been baptized on the same day as her grandmother, and called, after her, Felicia.) "And so, and so—well, I couldn't resist going to see after the poor little creature. I bought her a row of amber beads, the same that all of you used to wear when you were children, and some cheap toys, which I bought on the street as I went along—a red figure of Punch, and some little bells. The poor little soul couldn't contain herself for delight."

Nina grew paler and paler while her mother was speak-



ing. Every word went like a dagger stroke to her heart. How could her mother be so unkind! How could she speak with such outrightness and such satisfaction about that creature! Without taking any notice whatever of what the old woman had been saying, she took the vase with the roses from the mantel in order to put it on the table, which was laid for supper.

The mother was a little sobered by her daughter's cold manner, and went on, but in a much less lively way:

"The little puss is the most engaging creature possible, so sweet that one could almost eat her, with a dear little shock of brown hair and big blue eyes, and just as full of life and love and roguishness as she can hold."

Nina made no reply. She stood there pale as death, with sunken head and her eyes fixed on the carpet, with the vase and the roses in both her hands, which trembled violently.

Her mother went up to her, put her arm round her shoulder, and stroked her cheek gently, quite gently, just as one might some creature with a fearful wound, to whom one fears that every movement, however slight, may give pain.

"Won't you drive out yourself some day and have a look at the poor, poor little thing?" she asked, in very, very low, soft tones. The vase with the roses slipped out of Nina's shaking hands, fell to the ground, and was broken in pieces.

"Mother, mother, mother!" she groaned, hoarsely, clasping her temples with both hands. "Can you not see, oh! *can* you not see how cruel it is to force the thought of the existence of this—this—creature upon my mind? I work for it, you know I do; but as to thinking about it or caring for it, I cannot, I cannot!"

And then Nina hurried out of the room and threw herself, sobbing, on her bed.

When she came back to the little parlor she found her mother kneeling down and rubbing the carpet dry with a piece of rag where it had been wetted when the vase fell.

"But, mother!" remonstrated Nina, "why *don't* you



let Amandina"—that was the name of the portress—"attend to that?"

"Amandina has gone out to fetch a bottle of Sauterne—she told me you had ordered Sauterne, and she had forgotten it."

"Yes, I ordered Sauterne, because it is your favorite wine—and I remembered that—that it is the day when you were christened. It was for you that I brought the roses, and I wanted to give them to you. But give me the piece of rag, dear mother, or wait till Amandina returns."

"Oh, dear, it looks so dirty and ugly, the broken pieces and the spot in the carpet."

"What is there that does *not* look ugly in our lives," murmured Nina, who had kneeled down by her mother's side and took the rag almost violently from her hands. "They are now nothing but spots and broken pieces! Oh, my God, my God!"

Amandina came back with the wine; the roses and the strawberries were on the table, which was neatly and cleanly laid, and smelled delightfully.

Nina had arranged everything for the meal with great care, and provided several little things her mother was particularly fond of. The mother noticed this, and was much moved. From time to time she said:

"It's excellent, Nina; really quite good, Nina. Do try a little bit. You are eating nothing at all."

Then she began to talk about the things she had seen in the streets, to try and lead her child's thoughts, if possible, in some other direction. But the task was one quite beyond her power. She felt it more and more. Her words came fewer and fewer; her speech became slower and slower. Bit by bit the poor woman's shoulders drooped and became rounder and rounder. The little bit of joy which she had brought with her from her little trip was extinguished, slowly stifled by the dull, heavy grief, the heavy atmosphere of which always filled that small room.

It became dark, and she soon was quite silent. Then, as the darkness grew deeper and deeper, something that



was not unlike tranquillity came upon her spirit, and Nina's, too. So that when Amandina brought in the lamp, mother and daughter both felt the light as though it were a sudden stroke of pain.

---

So THINGS remained, in their old, dull routine, with only this difference, that now it often happened that Nina, returning home after her laborious day, found that her mother was not there. But when her mother did at last appear, excited, heated and yet depressed, she never uttered a word about where she had been; not a word.

But words were not necessary. The fresh smell of the meadows and the woods clung to her dress, and the expression in her eyes, so moved and so tender, told the whole story quite plainly. On one occasion Nina observed on her mother's dress a little, shining, curly, golden hair. She frowned angrily, and clutched at it to remove it. But the mother was too quick for her, and took the poor little hair, wound it round her finger and pressed it tenderly, tenderly to her lips. And, as she did so, she cast upon her daughter a serious, stern, disapproving—nay, almost contemptuous—glance; and, that day, vouchsafed her not a single further word. Yes, this same mother, who, when she arrived in Paris, had lost sight of her daughter's shame in her daughter's misery, and thought of nothing but throwing her protecting arms about her child.

---

FROM this unhappy moment something like enmity arose between mother and daughter; and this went on, taking all the time a sharper edge and a keener point. The mother was horrified by the hard selfishness of the daughter, and the daughter took it bitterly amiss of the mother that she persisted in occupying herself with the child, thus bringing constantly to her daughter's memory what she made every effort to banish from her mind.



The child was nothing to her, nothing except the living proof of her degradation. She held it in detestation, and would have been thankful to have it removed from her as far as the world's end. She had wished—yes, actually wished—for its death; but, as it would *not* die, she was willing to provide for its wants, so far as was absolutely necessary, but grant it any the least part or share in her existence, she positively would not. Not a thought, not a moment's feeling should it have. It was a thing she had quite done with. For her it existed no more.

And yet, now the babe seemed to be the one pivot on which her mother's existence turned.

The mother was, at first, satisfied with a visit every fortnight; then it increased to once a week, and, presently, there was no week in which she did not return from these excursions at least twice, her eyes shining with that tender light and her clothes full of that keen and sweet odor of the forest and the wildflowers. Now and then she bought some little toy, a little rooster which opened its beak and crowed, or a sheep with a nodding head. When she came home with it, she would take it carefully out of the paper it was wrapped in, examine it, smile to herself, and handle it in the careful, petting way grandmothers have with the playthings they are going to give their grandchildren, and then wrap it very slowly up again, throwing sidelong glances at Nina the while.

Once she brought home a little white dress, cheap, evidently, but very pretty. She spread it on her knees and began to fasten little blue shoulder-knots upon it. She played with it and worked at it in her sweet, coaxing way for some time, and it was plain that she did it to give Nina an opportunity of asking something about the child. But Nina said not one word.

The summer heats came on; nearly all Nina's pupils had left Paris.

One day the mother said:

"We might just as well go and spend a few weeks in the country; it won't cost much, and will do you no end of good and divert your mind a little."

Nina saw at once what the mother was driving at, and



frowned heavily—a thing she was now only too apt to do—saying, in a dry voice :

“You can do as you please. I shall not stir from where I am. Any change would only give me fresh pain. Divert my mind, indeed ! What can divert me now ? You might just as well say to a person at the point of death, ‘Get out of your bed and take some exercise !’ ”

Few as the words were, Nina had not uttered so many for some time.

The baroness answered, coldly :

“I was not talking for myself ; I want no change ; and, in fact, country or no country, I shall have to go back to Austria before long, for Rosie will want me. I was only thinking of you. While I am away I should be only too thankful to know that you were somewhere or other where your thoughts might be led in a different direction, and you wouldn’t brood and brood and brood as you do now.”

“Oh, I know !” said Nina, slowly ; “diversion and a different direction ! I know where you want to get me to go.”

The mother uttered a cry of impatience, and turned away from her.

In a little while Nina asked, gently :

“When must you go home ? ”

“Probably next week—I am only waiting for a letter from Rosie.”

“When does Rosie expect—expect—it to happen ? ”

“Early in August,” said the mother, who was evidently determined to say no more.

Nina was silent.

It had been many months since she had said a word to her mother indicating that she wanted to know anything about her brothers and sister.

---

EIGHT days later the baroness left. The day before her departure she went out to St. Eusébe. She brought back with her a little wreath of wildflowers, a poor little



bit of a wreath; the stalks of the flowers were quite short, and they had evidently been plucked by hands that had had little experience of such work.

"Lizzie plucked these flowers for you herself. She hurt one of her poor little fingers when she tore up one of the forget-me-nots. She sends you the little bit of a wreath with a kiss—and you ought really to go and see her while I am away," said the mother.

"*While* you are away?" said Nina. "Is it your intention to come back again?"

"Of course. I wonder you can ask. My home now is with you; where else should it be—where else?"

Nina accompanied her to the station, and then returned to the Rue Taitbout, and climbed up the five stories to her little dwelling-place, with feelings quite strange and even indescribable. It was something like a relief to her to feel herself for a while, at all events, absolutely alone. Thank God! at last there was no one to take notice of her. At last she was free to sob her heart quite, quite out.

This feeling of relief lasted for one or two days; and then she was seized by a terrible sense of desolation, a sense that amounted almost to fright, and the yearning for the home from which she was shut out forever shook her violently.

In spite of the obstinate and harsh silence and ill-temper she had kept up and displayed during the last days before she was left alone, her mother had treated her as tenderly as ever; but not a syllable had been said by that mother from which it could be gathered that she thought the daughter's return home was a thing to be contemplated as even possible. That she should sacrifice herself for Nina was evidently a simple matter of course to her; but to throw such a shadow upon the lives of the other children as would be cast by Nina's going among them, *that*, evidently, she could not bring herself to inflict upon them. Nina told herself this plainly; and bitter, indeed, were her feelings as she did so. She was cut to the quick, and became almost ill with grief and vexation.

What she so keenly felt was that her mother had not



made the least suggestion of her going with her; she would, of course, have refused to comply, but her mother might, at least, have proposed it to her!

The mother had been away ten days. She had written as soon as possible after her arrival, and told all about the warm reception the young couple had given her, and one thing and another; and there was a postscript with these words:

"Every one sends you the warmest and most tender messages!"

Every word in the poor letter showed what a struggle had gone on in the writer's heart between tenderness and truthfulness, and the perception of this cut Nina to the very soul.

She had no occupation for the moment, nothing to prevent her busying herself with her grief and nothing but her grief, and soon came to see only too clearly that the relief which goes with the absence of any need for restraining one's self before others is one that lasts a very short time indeed.

She had given up reading; and bending over needlework, which gave her no pleasure, and which is so easy to some women, caused her giddiness. To go out walking alone was what she disliked. So she hardly knew how to kill the wretched hours that had to elapse between one meal and another. Her meals were prepared and set for her by the portress. And she began to take some interest in them as, at least, some relief to the monotony by which her weary soul was oppressed.

She had just finished one of these meals; and she went and seated herself in the usual place by the cold, empty fireplace, opposite to her mother's easy-chair, which was empty, empty!

How she longed for that mother, with a longing mingled with anxiety, almost with dread! Her glance fell upon a few withered flowers which lay upon the mantel, and remained strangely fixed upon them.

"What was all that rubbish doing there? why had she not swept it away?" she asked herself. Then it came back to her that it was the wildflowers which that crea-



ture of misery and misfortune at St. Eusébe had plucked for her.

She pressed her hand to her forehead with angry vexation. Yes, she remembered now. Not to vex her mother she had refrained from throwing the flowers away; but she had not been able to bring herself to put them in water or take any other care of them. So they had remained where she had flung them down. Was she *always* to be reminded of her degradation, always? And then, once more, and in more passionate shape than ever, the terrible wish broke out in her heart, more distinctly, more articulately than it ever had: "Oh, if it would but die. If it would but, would but die!"

There was a ring at the door. She opened it. It was the postman. The letter was addressed to her mother, and bore the post-mark, St Eusébe.

She shut the door upon the man with some violence, and then—threw the letter on the table. It was nothing to her—she cared not to know what was in it. She sat down with her back to the letter, and took a book in her hand to drive it out of her thought. After she had turned the pages from where she began, she asked herself what she had been reading about—and, absolutely, could not tell.

She got up, took her hat and gloves, and went out to take a short walk to try and quiet her restless nerves. When she returned, the little parlor was all gray-dark with the deepening twilight; but something white glimmered indistinctly through the half-darkness. That was the letter. She clutched at it, clutched at it with a small, sharp cry. Hardly aware of what she was doing, but in order that she might do something, anything, to allay her dreadful excitement, she tore it into two pieces.

And, then, she felt as if she had struck herself at the heart, and every limb seemed as though it were failing in its duty. She stooped and picked up the pieces which she had thrown upon the ground, hastily lighted a candle, put the letter together and began to read it. It bore, that the little one had been seized with sudden illness,



and the physician feared inflammation of the brain, and doubted whether it would get over it.

That night she passed in a condition bordering on insanity. It seemed to her as though she had killed the child with her own hand almost, by that horrible, horrible wish of hers. Next day she went to St. Eusébe by the first train.

Impossible to describe the state of her mind as she went along the wretched, ill-paved village street, asking at one little shop after another where she should find the house of the carpenter, Sulpice Maréchal.

"Oh, Sulpice Maréchal—yes, that's the man whose wife is taking care of that pretty child who belongs to some duchess in Paris that won't have anything to do with it!" said a butter-woman to her. "Yes, yes; she knew all about her. She lived at the extreme end of the village in a house with a little garden. If madame wished, she would be quite pleased to take her there."

And, as she said this, the butter-woman gave Nina a sidelong, searching glance. It was clear that she began to have her own thoughts. But Nina was too preoccupied to notice her demeanor. They went on together.

"They tell me the child is ill," she said with difficulty, as they walked rapidly to their destination. "Do you know anything about its condition?"

"No," said the butter-woman, "I don't know anything. Is it really ill? The day before yesterday I saw it playing in the Maréchal's little garden. I always stop a bit to have a good look at it whenever I can, for it is such a charming little thing. Oh, dear me, dear me! Love-children are always beautiful—nearly always; and then they have such a bad time of it in this world; not a soul cares one jot about them. If they're boys—why, *then!* But a girl, like this little Felicia, what's to become of her, I should like to know?"

And, all the way, she went on gossiping in the same strain:

"That its own mother should put it away was a thing easy enough to understand; she had good reason to do so, no doubt, mother or no mother; but that she never



once came to see the poor little soul, that was horrible! Didn't madame think so, too? And the truth was, that she never did come—positively never. The village kept a sharp eye open about it, and they asked the station-master; so *they* knew. There was only one old woman who came—an old woman who looked as if she was somebody, but was very simply dressed—and *she* came often."

"Does she *mean* this torture; is she saying all this really to punish me?" asked Nina of herself. She could hardly breathe or look up.

"If the child is so badly ill, it is pretty sure to die," went on the butter-woman. "Well, that will be a relief to the mother, and the best thing for the child, too."

"No, it is impossible that she can have any idea that I am the mother," decided Nina.

They reached the Maréchals' house. It was built of gray stone, with a hanging upper story, had green shutters, and stood in a little garden with quite narrow pathways between rosebushes and beds of lavender and strawberries.

Nina looked all over the little house with anxious eyes. Two of the shutters were closed at one corner. She was about to ring the bell, which she saw hanging by the house-door.

But the door was suddenly opened, and a pleasant-looking little woman, with a stiff, starched and crimped cap over her dark, pretty face, came forward to Nina.

"Don't ring. The little one's asleep," she said, in a half-whisper.

Nina stepped forward into the little hall and took tight hold of the Frenchwoman with both hands.

"She is not dead?" she brought out, in scarcely audible tones.

"Oh, dear me, don't I tell you that she is asleep?" Then Mme. Maréchal turned and shut the door, which had remained open. "And who may you be who have come to ask about her, I should like to know?" said she, looking Nina straight in the eyes with a peculiar glance.

"I—I am its mother," Nina *wanted* to say; indeed, the words almost forced themselves from her heart to her



lips. But prudence closed her mouth before she gave utterance to them. It was not for nothing that her life had now for two years been one continuous lie—lie when she spoke, lie when she kept silence. Her proud temper had learned the lesson of evil submission to inevitable falsehood. And now she dragged that burden along with her on her path, mechanically, almost unconsciously.

“I am the daughter of Mme. von Jewitsch,” said she, all but inaudibly, “and as she is away on a journey, I have come in her stead to inquire about the little one. How is it with her?”

“Last night we had quite given up all hope; now she is getting along a little better,” said the woman.

“May I go in to her?” asked Nina, hesitatingly.

“No!” said Mme. Maréchal, shortly. “She would wake up directly—I cannot let any *stranger* in to see her.”

It was many years before Nina ceased to be haunted by the look of cold contempt with which the poor laboring man’s wife examined her from head to foot as she uttered that word—“stranger.”

---

NINA begged that they would find some corner in the little house for her to occupy till the child recovered, or, at least, till its illness took a decisive turn one way or another.

Mme. Maréchal made no difficulty as to this. She provided Nina with a nice, clean room, and sent up her meals to her.

“She hoped madame would be satisfied,” so she said, adding: “Madame must be good enough to excuse things. They aren’t quite what they should be; but the little one can’t bear any one about her but myself, so madame will quite see that I can’t trouble myself much about the housekeeping. Everything has to be left to the little servant; any one can see that at a glance.”

It seemed as if the long August day would never end, so slowly did it pass. Nina sat in her room with her



elbows in her hands and her eyes fixed upon the dial of the clock on the mantel.

The sultry, still, depressing air of that hot day came through the open window, mingled with the swishing sound of corn going down before the sickle of the reapers. But there was one little sound audible all the time in the midst of that made by the rich crop as it was leveled with the ground—a weak sound, as of something uttered with difficulty. And that was the painful rattling of the child's breathing, as it lay in its struggle with death.

She crept to the door of the sick-room. She listened and listened, with ears morbidly sharpened. She heard the monotonous step of a woman going up and down with a burden on her arm. She heard a low, motherly voice stammering out tender, caressing words. Then she heard a small, weak, hoarse voice lisping half-formed, scarcely intelligible words. Yes, she heard that quite, quite plainly.

She *could* not stand it any longer. She *must* see the child. She opened the door and looked in, only for one moment. She saw a small white something wrapped up in white, a little head with curly brown hair resting on the shoulder of the fond, faithful nurse, a little tender, white hand hanging over her shoulder.

Nina looked at all this only for an instant. Then the little one became aware of the presence of some one she was not used to, and began to whimper more painfully; whereupon Mme. Maréchal turned and looked sharply and straight into Nina's eyes. Again the same cold, hard, almost contemptuous, glance, measuring her from head to foot.

"I told you that I could not have any interference or disturbance here while the child is so ill," said she,

Nina retreated. While on the threshold of the room, holding the door-knob, once again she heard the monotonous step, the caressing murmur of the woman's voice as she held the child in her arms.

"The child that is not hers," said Nina's heart, suddenly; "not hers, but—mine."

She had seen it only for one little moment, the little



head with the golden-brown curly hair, the tenderly rounded small cheek, the little hand hanging helplessly, the soft outlines of the small, helpless child-body with its white covering.

Only for one little moment; but it seemed to her now as though she would go mad on the spot with longing love to have the child about her, to be about the child; as though she would willingly give all that was left of her poor, besmirched, spoiled life to be able to hold the child only one hour in her arms!

Late in the evening came the doctor. She managed to ask him, as he was going along the corridor, what his opinion was. All that he could venture to say was:

"This night will decide it."

That night! that endless, endless night! First, she closed the window and opened the door that led to the corridor, the corridor of the little French house, which had a strong smell of warm wood; and she remained standing at the door, listening, listening. Then she crept nearer and nearer, and cowered down at the threshold behind which her child was struggling for life. She folded her hands and prayed—yes, prayed; she who not so long before had boasted, even to unseemliness, of her lack of faith in God, and who now in her agony of helplessness prostrated herself in worship. She implored that this little life might be spared, implored it with the impassioned humility with which a child, conscious of offense, might beseech its father for some favor far, far beyond its deserts.

Yes; at this moment God was to her something real, indeed, something not afar off, but close to her, quite close—something which *could* not but listen to her, something which she felt she could not but press closer and closer to with her entreaties and implorations.

Yes, indeed. Women of her stamp need a God, a God with whom they can speak; by whom they can be heard, face to face.

The hours passed, one after the other; how slowly, how slowly!

The dark came, and seemed to Nina as though it en-



compassed her. Only the window of the corridor was visible, with its misty, dark-gray square, and through the key-hole of the sick chamber there came a sharply clear blue-gray spot of light. The child's hoarse, difficult breathing went on continually, and every now and then it whimpered pitifully. How long it lasted, how terribly long! And still Nina kept cowering at the door, listening, listening.

At last there came a sort of movement in the thick darkness surrounding her. It became thinner and thinner, more transparent, more transparent—all but white.

In the distance the crowing of the birds was heard. Nina involuntarily turned her head. As the noise of this crowing ceased, so was that hoarse breathing and whimpering heard no more in the child's room.

Nina dug her nails deep into her hands. She heard a slight rustling within, as of clothes being put on.

"It is all over now," said Nina to herself. "She will say a 'Paternoster' or so, and then come out and tell me that it is all over!"

But the door remained unopened. An hour passed. The daylight was now fully broken, the birds crowed no more, and numberless feathered creatures were twittering in the trees. The door remained closed! Nina, who could scarcely move, so stiff was she from remaining so long in the same position, struggled a little upright, and her dress rustled as she did so.

The door was opened and Mme. Maréchal stood upon the threshold. She was startled by the sight of the pale, miserable creature at her feet.

"How are things going?" stammered Nina, lifting up her heavy, trembling hands slowly and painfully.

"I think, I really do, that she is better; she is asleep, and the fever has subsided," said the woman.

"Thank God! thank God!" murmured Nina, and then added, humbly: "May I not see her yet?"

Mme. Maréchal softened.

"If you will promise to keep yourself quite still, come," she said.

Then Nina stepped over the threshold of the sick



chamber, and went up to the little, old-fashioned, yellow painted bed in the corner of the small room.

She stood for some little time motionless, in deep, almost reverent, reflection, and with clasped hands, gazing at the sweet, pale little face resting so well on the coarse but clean linen pillow; then she knelt down at the foot of the little bed, folded her hands in prayer, and finished there, with humble, grateful thanks to God, the prayer which she had outside that room begun in anguish and grief.

---

It was one warm afternoon late in the summer, in the middle of September, when Baroness Jewitsch, on her return from her journey to Austria, alighted at the little station of St. Eusébe. She had not sent previous word of her arrival to Nina, whom she knew to be still in the little place, as she wanted to surprise her. With a strange feeling of expectation she traversed the winding, crooked street of the little village, one side of which was in pitch-black shadow, while on the other the coarse stones of the pavement glistened in the sun like silver. At last she reached the little house in which the Maréchals lived.

She stopped at the little, low, lattice-gate of the garden, and looked over into it with delight.

It seemed to her that she had never yet in all her life seen such a nook of varied, blooming, cozy delight. In front of the house, and reaching up to the very shutters on the ground-floor, there was a whole palisade of sun-flowers, with broad rays of gold round their pitch-black countenances. At her feet there was a veritable profusion of asters, lilies yellow and rose-colored. All about the little circle of lawn in the middle of the garden the roses, champagne-colored or pale-red, shot up and were resting among the crowns of the slender little trees, which had already begun to shed their leaves, and appeared in beautiful relief against the blue background of the sky. All about the lattice of the inclosure there was a delightful confusion of dahlias. And over and



above all this swarms of insects were quivering in the sunshine, like a living veil, going up and down and forming a cloud of little singing creatures, which filled the little garden with their early autumn music in the most delightful manner.

There, there among the red dahlias there was something yet more delightful, and it was that which the old woman was so anxiously looking for.

Nina sat on the ground with her back to the little garden-gate. A wooden shovel was by her side. It was plain that she had used it to build up the big sand-hill which she was now decking with all sorts of flowers. And there, behind the sand-hill, contemplating these wonders with big, solemn eyes, lay a curly-headed little puss, in a dark-blue pinafore, with both its little hands resting on the ground, and its dear little bare legs stretched out as far as they would go.

All of a sudden, the little thing lifted up its eyes and directed them, beyond the sand-hill and Nina, to where the old woman was standing by the little gate. The big child-eyes grew bigger and bigger, stared more and more, became more and more solemn. Then, all of a sudden, the little creature sprang up, dashed over the sand-hill and past Nina, and trotted as fast as she could up to the grandmother, and stretched out both her little hands to the old woman through the slats of the gate.

The grandmother was affected nearly to tears.

"She knows me—after six weeks she knows me!" she exclaimed. "Wait, my pet, my darling, else I shall hurt you, throw you down. Take her a moment, Nina!"—who now come up, and, taking the child by both shoulders, lifted her up, while the old woman pushed open the gate.

But she had hardly got into the little garden before the little one began to twist and wriggle about impatiently to get out of her mother's hands and into her grandmother's arms. And then there was, indeed, no end of kissing and caressing, and prattle and laughter.

"She has never yet snuggled up to me in that manner,"



murmured Nina, as she took her mother's hand and kissed it.

"Oh, she and I are older acquaintances," replied the old woman, without thinking of what she was saying.

"That is true, and I shall never be able to catch up with you," said Nina, sorrowfully.

"Why not? How silly!" said the grandmother, and tried to make the child go to Nina. But the little one held the baroness tight round the neck with the small arms.

"Oh, let her be; she knows where she is best off," said Nina; and then her head drooped and she began to sob.

A voice spoke to her from the inmost depths of her being, and told her that she would always hold not the first, but the second place in her child's heart, as long as its sweet and precious life should last.



## SECOND BOOK.

ST. VALERIE in Caux—and a chill, unpleasant day for July! On the wooden balcony of the Beach Hotel there stood a young man looking down for whatever his eyes might find to regale themselves on. To the right, a booth with all sorts of cheap trifles; then the Casino, with its various uninteresting buildings, painted red, and extending for some distance. Further down, and nearer the water's edge, a long row of white bathing-huts—all this behind a low inclosure, and decorated all over with little red and white flags of different sizes. A little further to the left the "town-park" of St. Valerie, having at its center a large bed of pale-red, sickly-looking Malmaison roses, standing out from an uneven lawn of poor, dry shore-grass, which was surrounded by a path strewn with sand of staring yellow. Then a few scanty, starveling bushes, and next to them the low shed in which the life-boat was kept. Still further, the two wooden piers, stretching, gray and bald, far out into the sea; and, further still, a portion of the little town, tiny houses rising stiffly just above the sand-hills, most of them of gray stone put together without mortar; and among them, with sunken windows and walls painted green, half-ruin, half-poorhouse, the *Château de la Trompette*. Then, stretching far beyond, and vying with the glitter of the sea, as far as eye could reach, the perpendicular white rocks of the coast, bordered green at their tops. And beyond, nothing but sea and sky.

He was one of those who are not in the habit of allowing their eyes to remain long fixed on insignificant things. Casino, bathing-huts, the poverty-stricken "town-park," and the little town—all these had, so to speak, vanished for him into the ground, and he was alone with the sea and the sky. That sky was of a slaty gray, covered with small cloud fragments; the sea deep green, with broad stretches of violet shadow forming themselves between



the waves as they perpetually rose and fell, pushing each other aside in an endless and tumultuous series. Here and there white foam was visible in long streaks and separate spots, changing, changing, all the time, with nothing stable about them except change. And amid all this, that strange sound of lamentation which the sea emits, with so many modulations, during all the days and nights in which it knows no rest.

And wandering, as it were, between the desolate sky and the mysterious sea, a small, chill wind, which now seemed to take short starts forward, and now seemed to stand still awhile, and all the time kept vexing and worrying everything and everybody without being able to get far from that one spot.

The young man bitterly disliked that small, stinging wind; but he dearly loved the sea. He felt always as though it had some message for him, which he had never yet been able to understand.

It had been with him from early youth. He had never been able to settle for himself the question whether that message was an invitation to come nearer or a warning to keep his distance; but the enigma had always been the more fascinating to him because of the difficulty of its solution.

He could not live without the sea; therefore he had become a seafaring man.

He was a Holsteiner, and served in the Danish naval service—a rather large, blonde person, with an unusually fine-cut, beardless, sunburned face, with a short, straight nose and powerful chin. In his eyes there shone something of the melancholy light which rarely fails to dwell more or less in the orbs of sensitive human beings; and on his full lips were all the signs of the joyousness and high spirit which is the privilege of youth when the health is unimpaired and the conscience is quite clear. But eyes and mouth alike betokened a sweet kindliness of nature, unbounded goodness of disposition. And it was this which chiefly struck people when they first saw that handsome face.

The young man's name was Klaus von Olden, and he



had, only a little before this, come to France to visit the dearest and oldest friend of his youth, a Dane who had taken to painting. He had longed very much for the company of this friend, because of having lately undergone a heavy affliction. He had lost his mother, to whom he was attached with a really affecting, child-like devotion. And he yearned for some consoling sympathy, such as only this friend could give, who had, indeed, been almost more like a brother than a friend, and with whom, since their first separation, he had kept up a regular correspondence, though the intervals between their letters were sometimes considerable. He had hoped to find again in this friend the comrade of his youth, one with whom he had not merely played the wild tricks of boyhood, but who had also been able to share in all the high poetic aspirations of his far-reaching and idealist soul.

He had allowed himself to dream of their coming together again in the most intimate communion, and of the delight of narrating their life-story to each other, undisturbed by any third presence. How delightfully they were, in his fancy, to narrate it all, from the time when they had to go their separate ways; what long, gossiping, unrestrained talks he had looked forward to; talks which should give them that simple, unpretentious joy which is the greatest of all joys; talks in which they would summon up and almost see smiling upon them again dear, dead people; talks in which they would renew their laughter at the dry, old familiar jokes of their younger days, and recall many a word of affecting reproof or warning, and many more of deepest love and tenderness, which it had been their privilege to hear from father or from mother.

All this Klaus von Olden had confidently looked forward to. All this and more was to come of his meeting with Jens Larsen. But he was destined to meet with a disappointment, bitter, indeed.

For what was it that he had actually found in this old associate of his youth? A cynic, a gifted cynic, who had loafed away his powers and talents, and who was at that time living with a young person accidentally picked up in the little bathing-town where Klaus had come to visit



him. He received Klaus with noisy demonstrations of delight, and made a great outcry about the remarkable beauty which his friend had developed during the six years they had been apart. And he professed himself delighted beyond everything with the fact that Klaus had grown to be a head and shoulders taller than himself. He seized his arm and cried, again and again, each time louder than the last: "There's a biceps; there's a biceps for you!" and then went and dragged in his present, temporary companion, and exclaimed to her:

"Just look at this fellow! It's worth the trouble. Just look at him, I say!"

The young lady—a shopgirl dismissed from her employment not so long ago, and who was training to appear at some music hall or other—did not need to be told twice to do this; and, indeed, complied so zealously with her protector's suggestion that she began to make eyes at Klaus that very day.

Artists in numbers buzzed about this couple, young people who were traveling mostly in pairs like this unfortunate one just described. And occasionally there came young female teachers, traveling alone, who, so far, had preserved their respectability; but were minded, poor things, to enlarge their field of view by consorting with artists and emancipated folk generally.

All this confusion and disregard of the fixed duties and relations of society was repulsive beyond measure to Klaus. He might have put up with the behavior and doings of Bohemians, social gypsies who were frankly and without qualification so; but this demoralized mixture of elements which ought to be kept severely apart, this fraternal alliance between respectable middle-class persons and conditions, on the one hand, and audacious unrestraint on the other, was nothing but disgust to him.

This set of people did nothing but sing, dance, guzzle and joke the whole livelong day, and spared no pains to make him one of themselves.

And, sooth to say, Klaus von Olden, though given to poetic reverie, was not exactly a saint. He could take a good deal more than his fair share of whatever was



going in the shape of noisy and unrestrained frolic; but as things were here, and suffering as he was from the loss of all that had been, and the failure of all that he had expected, in that early friendship, his higher sensibilities were painfully at work in him, and it was disagreeable beyond measure to be in the company of people by whom all the finer and deeper movements of his being were checked and brought almost to a stop.

It was in Veules that he had renewed his intercourse with his friend and met this unhappy circle. He bore the vexation of these unsympathetic surroundings for a little while, clinging to the hope that he might still discover something of the earlier man in his degenerate friend; and then he abruptly left the place and went on to St. Valerie, an hour further by the railroad, to rid himself of the disagreeable impression and be for awhile himself again.

"If you really want my company you can follow me," he had said to his friend on leaving; "but I do beg of you to come on by yourself." And Jens had laughingly promised to do so. However, three days had now elapsed and his friend put in no appearance. Klaus von Olden began to ask himself whether it was worth his while to lounge and fritter away his time any longer, and very soon answered that question in the negative. The bathing there was by no means agreeable, owing to the roughness of the shore; and the liberal view of themselves afforded by the French ladies, with their peculiar bathing costume, was anything but an attraction to Klaus, accustomed as he was to the stricter ways of German sea-side places.

A quarter of an hour before the moment when we first catch sight of him he had just finished packing his small belongings and had made up his mind positively to leave the place the next morning. And now he was standing on that wooden balcony and looking at things in general, as we have seen him. The sun went quite down. There was a little glimmering of struggling dull red light among the small, broken clouds on the horizon, and then that ceased, too. The lamps began to show, one after



the other, along the inclosure of the Casino; he heard the light sounds of French dance-music—that music in which there is levity, but no joy—mingling with the monotonous booming of the sea; and the light tones struck upon his ear from the distance as might the humming of insect swarms out of which fancy might vainly try to construct some melody.

All of a sudden, quite close to him, he heard sounds coming through the thin party-wall that separated him from the adjacent apartment. He heard something that at once drove sea and Casino out of his thought: a German song, half-sung, half-hummed, in a soft, caressing voice, tinged with melancholy, the voice and tones with which some young mother might try to coax her child to sleep:

“A mill-wheel turns and turns,  
In a green, sequestered spot;  
And there I sought my darling,  
Sought, but I found her not!

“She swore to be true forever,  
And gave me that dear little ring;  
But she stayed but a little while with me,  
Then fled, as a bird takes wing.

“And I’d fain mount horse and fare  
Forth fighting, fighting still,  
And death or victory dare  
As God, my Lord, shall will—  
And death or victory dare  
As God, my Lord, shall will!”

Between the first and second stanza the voice made a little pause. And it seemed to Klaus as though he then caught the soft twitter of the voice of a child sweetly overcome by sleep. Then the singer sang each verse in a voice lower and lower still, until at the last it was difficult to catch anything whatever of the tones. Then the song ceased altogether. And now there was no sound about him at all but of that music from the Casino, with its mocking, impish levity; only that and the never-ceasing roar of the sea. A sort of hunger for that song, to hear it once again, quite overpowered him and brought the tears to his eyes. The fact is, that the poor fellow’s



heart was very sore, and his solitude weighed heavily on him. The song had sounded in his ears like an echo of everything that had been most dear and sacred to him in his childhood. Often and often had his mother sung it to him when she was rocking him to sleep on her knees at a time he could never, never forget, when he was quite a little fellow and very ill, indeed.

Never does any one realize how dear is home, and how dear the songs of home, as when these home songs are sung in a strange land. Then it all comes back with irresistible power; the song, the home, and all that is implied in that wonderful word. The parents' house; the soft warm caresses of the mother; the first sweet, dreamy fancies about the life that is to unfold itself in the future; that firm faith in Heaven and the world and ourselves, which, alas! may since have died out utterly in our souls; that boundless hope which sees or knows no limits to attainment either in this world or the next.

The poor fellow rubbed the tears away with his knuckles, just as he had done when a little child. Oh, Heaven! where had all that vanished to now? Without some influence, some surroundings like that, life was not worth living, not worth the smallest coin known in the moneys of man. Was he never to know anything of that sort of life again? Yes; yes. It seemed to him all at once as though he saw the eyes of some child looking up to him, and, in those eyes, something of the light, and life, and joy of those early, unforgotten years.

Then there came upon him a longing for a hearth of his own, for beloved beings to work and care for; a longing to liberate his soul by lavishing on others some of the wealth of love that lay so heavily on his own good, noble heart. And how sweet, how lovely it all seemed to his fancy! His home, his young wife singing his children to sleep. He saw her quite plainly, going to and fro with soft, gliding steps, with a sweet little creature in her arms. He heard her singing to it, in tender, soft, pathetic tones:

“A mill-wheel turns and turns  
In a green, sequestered spot.”



Yes, the tender, soft, pathetic tones which come of a great, great happiness, such as he would know well how to impart in all its fullness to the wife of his heart and bosom.

Then his mood changed, and he began to scold and smile at himself for his exaggerated sentimentality. And, presently, a strange thing happened. The next room had a door giving on to the balcony; it was thrown open. His heart beat with violence and he stepped out. There, close to him, separated only by a partition of wooden slats, with intervals quite large enough to see what was on the other side, he beheld a slender female form. Something like a cold shudder went through him—the lady on the balcony was an old woman with white hair.

Could it have been she who had sung the song? He would have wagered his life that the voice he had heard belonged to a young woman. For a little while he stood there quite motionless, gazing fixedly, but in deep disappointment. Then the old woman turned round, showing as she did so a finely-cut profile, and dark eyes full of fire and life. Then, speaking to some one within, in German, but with an accent somewhat strange to him, she said:

“Nina, do come out! The air is quite delightful now, and the little one is sound asleep.”

And then there came forward to the old woman's side—and how long his memory held that first sight of her!—a second female figure, showing a sweet languor in every movement of her frame, something of a shy distrust of herself in all her bearing, and a face which, to him, in his present mood, was absolutely irresistible with its pathetic expression. Never in all his life had he seen a pair of eyes so beautiful and sad.

She looked very pale, all the paler for the imperfect light. The color of her hair he could not exactly make out; but he saw that it was very rich and soft, and that she wore it put back from her forehead and gathered into a well-arranged knot at the back of her head. Her dress was very simple, some dark *percale* with round, white spots, and it was fastened at her waist by a leath-



ern girdle of light color. She was far from being stout; but the outlines of her frame were soft and round and inviting to the eye, and struck him particularly, as he rarely saw anything like it among his native surroundings. He had never seen anything of the same sort except when he went ashore in foreign harbors. Spanish women were somewhat like it; but no Spanish woman had, in addition to this remarkable beauty of outline, such an expression of melancholy, such chaste reserve in every attitude of the body and every lineament of the face.

"Isn't it all beautiful and sweet, air and sea, all?" asked the old woman.

The younger one was resting her folded hands upon the ledge of the balcony. She drew a long breath with evident satisfaction.

"Wonderfully beautiful!" she said, in low tones, and in her voice there was the same sadness and sweetness which had so caressed his soul when she sang the little song of his home. "Wonderfully beautiful! Ah, if one could but take the delight of it all in with an untroubled soul!" she added in a yet lower voice. And then she turned her head in a chance way toward Klaus, and her glance met that of the young man, who, almost in spite of himself, made a slight bow of deep respect.

She was so startled that she returned his greeting in an involuntary, slightly awkward way, and then, almost before he could realize that she had done so, she had slipped back inside the house like a young doe that sees a hunter in the distance. The old woman followed her, and he was once more alone, quite alone.

---

THE impish music of the Casino had wholly ceased, and the audience dispersed, chattering and laughing, to their several homes. He could hear them painfully well as they went along the quay beneath him, and the shrill



voices and unrefined laughter disturbed him grievously. It made him think of the wretched company which he had fled from Veules to be rid of, and it chased away his better and deeper thoughts, bringing him violently again to earth.

The corridors of the hotel filled with people. Doors were opened and shut. Presently all was still, and he heard nothing but the sea's strong voice. And again there came to him the old, old fancy of the message that that sea had for him! And whether it was an invitation to come nearer for blessing, or a warning to keep distant to avoid misery, he could not determine; could not, now, never had been able to, heretofore.

---

AND, as might be expected, he did *not* leave the place next day; but he learned from the hotel register that the two ladies adjoining him were inscribed as the "Baroness Jewitsch and daughter."

"Baroness Jewitsch and daughter!" He could gather nothing decisive from that; that sounded as though the daughter were an unmarried person traveling under the protection of the mother. But, as he could not but suppose that the daughter was the mother of the child whom she had lulled to sleep, he concluded, quite as of course, that she must be a married woman. That there could be anything irregular or out of the beaten path in the case was a thing which, in view of the highly distinguished and dignified exterior of the ladies, was not likely to occur to any person who was without any inkling of the circumstances, and least of all to the inexperienced Klaus von Olden.

Perhaps it ought to have been set down "B. J. and her daughter-in-law." This was how, after some reflection, he settled that it must be. And, of course, that day he looked out anxiously for the two ladies at the table d'hôte, at luncheon time. And he saw them, while he



was still a good way off, at the long, narrow dining-table in the middle of the low dining-room—a room which smelled strongly of pine wood, and had ornamented panels in which were depicted, in a wild, impressionist way, some of the best parts of the St. Valerie scenery.

Between the older and younger lady there sat a very little girl, with bare arms and shoulders, and they had rolled up a cloak for her to sit on that she might reach up to the table. Anything prettier than this tender little creature, with its fresh face and big eyes and gold-brown curly hair, Klaus had never seen in all his life.

At first, the little one paid no attention to any one but her mother, who now appeared to him not quite so lovely and also somewhat older than she had looked last night in the imperfect light. He bowed politely as he seated himself opposite the ladies, and his greeting was by them returned almost stiffly, as on the previous night, while his efforts to enter into conversation with them were discountenanced; any little service which he found occasion to offer during the course of the meal being met with the shortest possible “thanks,” without any encouragement to any further advances. The only one of the party that looked at him at all steadily or approvingly was the little one, and she smiled upon him very decidedly indeed; and the longer he looked at her the more charming he thought her. She prattled all the time either to the ladies or to herself, and behaved herself as prettily and obediently as possible, and, in fact, was the delight of the whole table.

At dessert, they put an apricot divided in two upon the little thing's plate, and she suddenly took one of the halves and held it out to him. He was quite moved and flattered by what the lovable little soul did, but refused what she offered. And now she began to chat to him with all sorts of pretty and sweet movements of her lively little frame, and wanted to tell him things which he could not make out, as she saw and was vexed. She prattled more and more, and he begged the two ladies, with a smile, to be her interpreter. They gave him a



polite but short answer, and then the elder of the two cried to the child, almost sternly :

“You must not be troublesome, Litzie !”

Then the ladies rose. The younger made no demonstration ; the elder, who took out the little girl, turned round at the door and gave a slight nod. But the little girl did not stop looking round at him until she was fairly out of the room.

He felt a contraction at the throat. Both ladies had so decidedly repulsed his advances that he could not help a wounded feeling.

He could imagine no reason for this, except that they had their share of the haughtiness generally attributed to Austrian ladies ; and he had recognized them as such by their accent. Well, well. As he looked at the company, right and left, it was natural and proper enough for them to avoid making acquaintance among these shop dandies and over-dressed tradeswomen ; but—it was not exactly on the street that they and he had met, and he had offered them courtesy. And he thought that the mere look of him might have sufficed to remind them of that. He had been used to having discrimination exercised at once in his favor by everybody, and, bringing sympathy, he was accustomed to being everywhere received with answering sympathy. He spent the rest of the day in asking himself whether, peradventure, these proud Austrians had taken him for an obtrusive commercial traveler, and in trying to make up his mind whether he would leave them altogether to themselves for the future or try to make them feel what a blunder they had made. And he was as nearly sulky as his sweet temper permitted. But in his secret soul their resistance made him all the more keenly desirous of becoming more closely acquainted.

He returned from a long walk in the lovely environs of St. Valerie, and anticipated a renewal of enjoyment in coquetting with his pretty little neighbor opposite. But, instead of little Felicia, lo ! there sat opposite him a copper-faced Frenchwoman, with projecting teeth and a gigantic bust. The Austrian ladies were seated, with the



little girl, apart from the rest of the company, all by themselves, at a little table next to the window. He bit his lip. Toward nightfall, when he stepped out on the balcony, he saw the ladies at the end of it furthest from him. It was plain that they had shifted their room to avoid his neighborhood.

---

"I TOLD you how it would be. In a little bathing-place like this it will be difficult to avoid making acquaintances," observed Baroness Jewitsch. This was the morning after the day which Klaus von Olden had spent in such vexation of spirit, forming one contradictory plan after another. The mother and daughter were seated together in their little room. The glass door leading to the balcony stood open, the apartment was flooded with sunshine, and an odor of sea-weed, tar and salt water filled the air. The mother sat in an armchair darning a pair of very little socks. She was always doing something, partly from old habit, and chiefly because the trouble in her poor heart was too keenly felt when she did not try to dull it with some needlework or other.

The daughter was seated on the step, between the window and the balcony, with her brown head bowed down and her hands in her lap. The knitting at which she had been making a pretense of working had slipped out of her hands and lay at her feet on the threadbare carpet.

"Oh, mother, what in heaven can it matter whether a few human beings speak to us or whether they do not?" she murmured, in a tired voice. "It is so sweet to be together all the three of us once again, without anybody to come between. I don't care to look at strange people or hear a word they have to say."

"But *they* have eyes and ears, and can't help looking at you and listening to what you say," replied the old woman, in a somewhat more irritated tone than she generally used in speaking to her daughter. "People interest themselves in us and try to approach us."



"And if they do, well—let them please themselves," said Nina.

"It is easy to talk like that, but—but—" The old woman stopped short.

Nina pressed her hand over her forehead.

"I understand," said she, in low tones. "Yes, you mean that people might ask questions, and it is hard for you to have to invent something or other all the time to cover up my position. We will retire a little further into the background."

"We must, indeed," said the mother, with a sigh.

But Nina made such convulsive movements with her wooden knitting-needle that it snapped in her hands.

"Oh, mother, mother!" she cried, "if you only knew what pain and grief it is to me that you should suffer as you do! Go back to Austria, to the dear creatures you love so, and where your life may have some brightness. Leave me to my fate. I shall be able to struggle with it somehow or other."

"I should not like to see matters take that shape at all," said the mother, almost impatiently.

"You fear that I might sink lower and lower?" asked the girl, in a slow voice, frowning heavily.

"No, Nina; no," answered the mother, quickly. "But what I do fear is that you, imprudent as you are and always were, would run your head against the wall, and, in some fit of impatience, would hurl the truth at the faces of people; and that would just simply make existence an impossibility to you."

"Do you think so?" replied Nina, shrugging her shoulders. "I would wager not a little that half the people who know me in Paris have guessed my secret."

"It is possible; but they are thankful that you keep it back from them and give people about you the right to behave as though they knew nothing to your prejudice. In some sad situations all that the world requires is that persons should dissemble in its presence, and thinks it a grave breach of decorum not to do so."

Nina set her elbows on both knees and supported her face on her two hands.



"Dissimulation! Lies! Always, always lies!" she groaned. "It is horrible, horrible! Oh, to be able to hold one's head erect once more, to look people straight in the face, to be able to speak out the truth, the whole, full, unmeasured truth! If you could only know how I yearn for it, how I hunger for it!"

She clinched her fist and then opened it, stretching her fingers wide as if to symbolize the breadth and largeness of the relief she craved for.

"Yes, often, often am I tempted to turn my back upon all these respectable people whom I have to play the hypocrite with and—and fight my way among those before whom I should not need to go about downcast; and they are not the worst in Paris."

"Nina, for the love of God, how can you let such a thing cross your lips? Think, think! What would become of the child?"

"And what will become of it in any case under our circumstances?" said Nina, bitterly. "Besides"—and she stooped to pick up her knitting and put it away in her workbasket—"it is high time to give the little one her milk. Little woman!" she cried, going toward the balcony, "little woman!" once again. She put out her head to look, but the "little woman" was nowhere to be seen. "For God's sake!" exclaimed Nina, "she cannot have fallen over the railing?"

"Oh, don't be so silly!" said the old woman, who could hardly keep down her own agitation. "Her little nose hardly reaches the top of the railing. And as if there would not have been a mob and noise enough below in the road if any such mishap as that took place; but—where—where—is she hiding? Don't worry like that, Nina. *Don't*, I say; nothing can have happened. Little woman! little woman!"

Pale to the very lips, their temples damp with agitation, and their hands all of a tremble, the two women stood on the balcony looking in every direction for the child.

"Good heavens, there she is!" suddenly exclaimed the elder lady.



There, at the other end of the balcony, sat little Felicia on the arm of Klaus von Olden. It was quite plain that he had found the greatest favor in the sight of the tiny creature, and there she was in the highest delight. Just as soon as she caught sight of Klaus she had crept through the openings at the bottom of the partitions dividing room from room along the balcony till she got at him. He knew that the ladies would be quite anxious about her, and expected them to appear at any moment; and when he saw them, he gave them a bow, which he could not help accompanying with some laughter, and then considered what he must do next.

He might have gone along the corridor; but it was not at all to his fancy to give them the child back at their door and be sent about his business then with "a thousand thanks;" and, as to receiving him within their sleeping apartment, that, of course, the ladies could not think of doing. But they could not very well repulse him upon the balcony; and he was determined to seize the opportunity of presenting himself to them there. Accordingly, he took Litzie in his arms, and, stepping with his long legs over all the hindrances in his way at each room along the balcony, went to the agitated Austrians.

"I am delighted to be able to restore your little jewel to you, madame," said he, holding out the child to Nina.

"Many, many thanks!" said Nina, in a low voice and almost with a sob, as she stepped back with the little one into the room.

Klaus and the old baroness remained alone. He had on a blue morning costume, such as all the young men are in the habit of wearing at the sea-side—the clerks of the big dry-goods stores of Paris during their three weeks' holiday just as much as the members of any aristocratic club—but it became him a good deal better than most. The old woman's glance rested with pleasure upon him. She had an invincible preference for handsome young men, and, and—well, she *could* not bring herself to be discourteous or disagreeable.

"Pray allow me to introduce myself to you, madame,"



he began, bowing deeply to her. "Von Olden, lieutenant in the Danish navy."

The moment she heard the word "navy," his cause was gained. Her lively temper carried her off her feet. She could not deny herself the pleasure of a nice gossip with a satisfactory fellow-creature belonging to her own social sphere. She told him her own name in the most natural way in the world, and, further, that she had two sons, both in the navy, and that she had, in consequence, recognized the sailor in him yesterday, at table, on the spot.

"Really?" he answered, with a suppressed smile, which, however, was not without some roguishness. "I am truly surprised to hear that; I should rather have thought from your demeanor that you took me for some obtrusive commercial traveler."

"For a commercial traveler—you?" The old woman laughed quite merrily. "Do you think I have no eyes in my head? Certainly one can't tell so well and quickly about foreigners as one's own country people; but, for all that, one can't make any very great mistake about the class which any one belongs to. How in the world could you get it into your head that I took you for a commercial traveler?"

He laughed lightly.

"Your behavior at table yesterday made me think so."

"My behavior! Was I discourteous to you, then?" asked the old woman, somewhat anxiously.

"No," he answered, "not discourteous; but you made me keep my distance."

A glass window now opened behind him, and a head was put out, whose owner did not seem in the best of tempers.

The fact is, that Klaus had been talking to the baroness just at the last of the fences on the balcony dividing the apartments, and was where he had no right to be; so the old woman had no alternative except either to be rude and abruptly break off the conversation with him, or to ask him to step over to their part of the balcony. And she could not bring herself to be rude to the young man.



"You are interfering with other people's property in an unwarrantable manner, Mr. von Olden," she said. "Better come over here to us."

"May I, really?" he said, hesitating to do it.

She gave a good-humored nod, and pushed to him one of the folding-stools on the balcony and seated herself on the other. She was now in her own element. She was once again the amiable housewife and hostess she had been while her husband lived, and which she had continued to be in that little dwelling on the third story where she contrived to make things so pleasant for her sons' comrades that they preferred to spend their evenings with her and her sons to passing them in the most aristocratic drawing-rooms in the city.

"I *am* so delighted to hear German once more, amid all this snappy Gallic chatter," he said, after they had gossiped awhile about one thing and another; which made her ask him:

"What can have brought you to such a tiresome little place as this St. Valerie? It's well enough for women and children; but young gentlemen want rather more entertainment."

Klaus turned away his head.

"It is only six weeks since I lost my mother," he murmured, and his voice suddenly sounded thin and hoarse.

"Oh, poor, poor fellow!" said the old woman, the tears coming into her eyes. And this was not only sympathy with the bitter trouble, evidently so bitterly felt, of Klaus von Olden. She couldn't help thinking of her boys at home, and how they would feel if she were taken from them. And then the sudden thought struck her whether the two lads, now so devoted to her, might not soon let her slip from their memory. And this went like a dagger-stroke to her heart.

There was a little pause, and then she began again, looking him over carefully:

"But you surely haven't come here for the benefit of your health?"

"No," said he, with a smile breaking through his depression, "though some will have it that sea-baths are



only good, really, for people who have nothing the matter with them. At all events, that's what our people at home stoutly maintain. But I should not in any case have come so far from home for my health. No—I came, madame, I came—”

“Well?”

“It seems to me presumptuous to talk so much about myself; I don't see how you can be much interested in my lot.”

“But it does interest me very much.”

He bowed, and took off his white straw hat.

“I did not come to visit this place. My journey was really to Veules, to look up an old friend of earlier days, who is now an artist and lives in France. But our meeting was a great disappointment to me; he has changed very much, and the people about him were much too noisy for my present frame of mind. So I migrated to St. Valerie, and told him to follow me if he wanted to be with me. So far, I have seen nothing of him. If he is too merry for me, it is plain that I am too sad for him. It has been quite painful to me.” Klaus shrugged his shoulders and smiled in a rather melancholy fashion.

All of a sudden he turned round and began to listen. From the room within there came through the window, which, however, Nina had closed, or nearly closed, that sound which he had heard the other evening—

“A mill-wheel turns and turns  
In a green, sequestered spot.”

“If you only knew how it went to my heart, when I heard that little song, so far away from home, the evening before last, when I was still your near neighbor.” He put his cap on again and drew it partly over his eyes. “Really, I am ashamed of such sentimentality in such a time as ours? But the truth is, the atmosphere of my home seemed to breathe in every tone! You must excuse me. I had not heard the little song since my childhood, and my mother used to sing it to me when I was down with a serious illness.”



The little song ceased. Nina drew one of the wings of the door slightly open and said, in a low voice:

"The little one is asleep." Then she caught sight of Olden and drew back quickly.

He rose.

"Do be so very good as to present me to madame—to your daughter—my dear lady," said he, turning to the baroness, who could hardly move hand or foot in her perplexity, while her cheeks reddened deeply.

"Mr. von Olden desires to be presented to you," murmured she, almost mechanically. "He is an officer in the navy, like both our lads at home." Then, doing all the violence to herself of which she was capable to get some self-restraint, and while everything swam before her eyes, she added: "My daughter is not married. Our little darling is an orphan. She belongs to a daughter whom—whom—I have lost."

"Ah! is that so?" and a feeling of great joy ran through him as he bent before Nina.

But the old woman felt as if her strength was altogether failing her, and that she was in no state to go on talking in her former easy way.

"We might wake the little one," she whispered him. "Go quite gently through our chamber and along the corridor." She put her hand on his shoulder, almost pushing him on.

"Pray forgive me for taking up so much of your time, madame," he murmured, in some perplexity.

"Oh, not at all; not at all. It has been a great pleasure to me to make your acquaintance;" and she held her hand out to him.

He touched it gently with his lips and murmured, in a sort of beseeching way:

"May we meet soon again!" and then went, as he had been told, very lightly through the chamber of the two ladies to the corridor. He had quite a strange, almost solemn, feeling at having been permitted to put his foot in that little room. As he went through, his glance fell for a moment on the bed where little Felicia lay sleeping with her small nose turned to the wall. How sweet and



suggestive of the dear home life it was to him in his grief and solitude!

But while he went out and wandered among the sand-hills to dream about all dear and sacred things, the mother and daughter stood before each other like creatures turned to stone.

Nina was the first to recover herself and speak.

"I thought you had made up your mind positively that we were to make no new acquaintances?" she said, not without some irritation.

"In this case it would really have been difficult to evade it without being too rude," answered the mother.

"Oh, Heavens!" cried Nina, and said not a further word. She and her mother had retired within their room from the balcony, and spoke in quite low tones, not to disturb the little sleeper. Nina seated herself again on the step by the glass-door and went on hurriedly with her knitting. The mother also seized her needlework; but, this time, it was she who let it fall idly in her lap. In a little while she said:

"What a handsome fellow he is!"

"Who?" asked Nina, absently, looking up from her work.

"Who? Why, this Klaus von Olden—I think it was Olden he called himself. He serves in the Danish navy. I have rarely seen such a handsome creature."

"Do you think so?" said Nina, indifferently.

"Yes; he has something about the mouth that looks like Heinz—don't you think so?" asked the baroness. Heinz was her youngest, and especial pet.

"I didn't examine him closely," sighed Nina, in a tired voice. "I was all the time vexing myself that he would remain so long out there. I had the greatest trouble to put the little one to sleep. Couldn't you, really, get rid of him?"

"Oh, I had such a nice gossip with him; he reminded me of my lads at home," murmured the mother, in a shy, shamefaced way. "Besides, I don't think that we need give ourselves any anxiety about this new acquaintance; I don't think he'll remain long in this place."



The old woman's voice trembled; and then she began all at once to sob violently. It was the first time that she had quite broken down under the burden which she had borne so valiantly now for nearly three years. It was the first time that she realized fully what sacrifices she must submit to in order to share and lighten her daughter's unhappy lot.

The sound of the mother's weeping woke the child. She turned round to her grandmother and stretched out her little arms to her; and then her poor little face began to work, and she cried, too.

The old woman sat down on the bed by the baby and did her best to quiet it with caresses and fond words.

"Be quiet, little woman, my darling. Go to sleep again nicely, pet! Grandma has no sense; grandma will behave better, my pet, my sweet, my treasure!"

---

THE three are taking their supper—dinner they called it at St. Valerie—once again at the little extra table by one of the windows of the big, low-roofed dining-room; but this time there was a fourth chair at that table.

Klaus von Olden had found his way, somewhat later than the others, into the midst of the confused rattle of spoons and knives and forks and the odors of soup, and, seeing the Austrian ladies, bowed to them, receiving in return a friendly nod. He had to pass by them to reach his place at the long table, and stopped to exchange a few words.

All of a sudden little Felicia, who was almost entirely hidden by a big napkin tied behind her neck, and who had been absorbed in the task of getting the soup to her mouth with her spoon, which she did most conscientiously and cleanly, lifted up her head. Her little face beamed with delight at the sight of her tall, blonde friend. Her eyes seemed to dance in her head, and one small dimple after another appeared in her cheeks. All of a sudden



she jumped to her knees with all a small child's suppleness, bent forward and struck the vacant corner of the table by her grandmother with her small fists, and prattled, with her soft, rather deep chest-voice:

"Here eat; here eat!"

Olden laughed, and was about, modestly, to go to his place, with some little hesitation, however, when Nina, with no change whatever in the melancholy indifference which now characterized everything she did, turned to her mother and said:

"Mamma, do ask Mr. von Olden to take a seat with us here. No doubt it bores him to sit with all those strangers at the long table."

The baroness looked up at her daughter with astonishment; but she had plainly no alternative except to ask Klaus to join them.

The baroness and the young man talked freely enough while they were at table; but Nina's melancholy bearing was quite unchanged. She said but little, made now and then some insignificant remark, which was precious to Klaus because of the sweet sad smile that accompanied it, and the exquisite softness and purity of the tones in which it was uttered. Her only idea in suggesting that Klaus should join them at dinner was to give her mother a pleasant hour, and it was a sad pleasure to her to see how well she had succeeded. The old woman behaved just like a bird taken out of its cage and set at liberty; full of delight at being able to move its wings freely once again, but still filled with a sort of anxious doubt and scudding hither and thither without taking any direct flight. She told him all sorts of things about her home, things which could not by any possibility interest Klaus, and at which a cold man of the world would have smiled with superiority. But Klaus was anything but a cold man of the world. He was a young idealist, brimful of goodness of heart and goodwill to everybody. The young man was simply and heartily grateful to the old lady for the motherly sympathy she displayed to him, and was as far as possible from testing her talk by any high standard of criticism.



As the talk with the mother went on, he stole a look, from time to time, at Nina's beautiful, pale face; and he asked himself what could possibly be the solution of the problem presented by its strange, almost unearthly, sadness.

---

FROM this time he saw a great deal of them, and now took all his meals at their table. He accompanied them in their walks, and sometimes, when the walk lasted longer than usual, he had to carry the child home. It was a merry delight to him to feel the small, soft body in his arms, and her little warm arms round his neck. And how Lizzie snuggled up to him; how tight she held him! And every now and then she would fasten her little moist mouth upon his cheek and look at him out of the corner of her eye with the most flattering coquetry, and with an expression which plainly said that she hoped he set the proper value on the high favor she did him.

And when she caught sight of him coming up to them, she ran to him with her little arms wide open, screaming with delight, as fast as her little legs would carry her. He laughed, and yet was much moved, and declared that he had never made a conquest on which he so prided himself as that of this fond, sweet little creature.

Nina remained always melancholy and quiet, friendly but reserved. She was the only one of the three to whom his coming and going seemed indifferent. And when the baroness became fully convinced of her daughter's indifference, she allowed the last traces of reserve to disappear from her own relations with the young man. His company was a sheer delight to the old lady, and why should she not enjoy it to the full? As to his falling in love seriously with Nina, such a thing did not seem possible to her. She saw only too plainly the little wrinkles that were coming in Nina's face, and how it



had lengthened under the deep and bitter suffering she had undergone. Her daughter seemed to her prematurely aged, and hardly to be called beautiful at all now.

With this feeling, she made no difficulty in leaving Klaus sometimes alone with Nina. When they were thus alone together, it happened only in the accidental way such things do in the comparative unrestraint of holiday life at the sea-side. And Nina generally broke such occasions off somewhat short, not from prudence or prudery but because all intercourse with strangers was too burdensome an exertion to her since her misfortune.

One day she strolled out alone with Litzie to Boutautre, a village in the suburbs, and walked through its street of very old-fashioned houses, with large, small-paned windows, and tall, black straw roofs, on which Iris was growing in gay profusion; while the gardens in which they stood were full of roses and sunflowers.

Immediately at the rear of the cottages there was a small, thick wood, quite a little forest, and the ground rose rapidly, so that the shadow and perfume of the trees fell heavily upon the village street, which was so little frequented that it was thickly grown with grass.

Nina was tired; the child was tired. She sat down on the grass at the edge of the forest, and the child began to pluck wildflowers. Suddenly she uttered a cry of delight and was in Klaus von Olden's arms.

"You had better take care or I shall run off with your niece yet," said Klaus, putting the child down by Nina's side. "You don't seem to realize what advances the young lady makes me!"

"Oh, I see it all well enough," said Nina, smiling, for Litzie was now clasping her tall friend's knee with both arms and one side of her large white Holland pinafore was spread all over him.

Klaus took hold of her under the arms and tossed her high in the air. She screamed with delight.

"Would you like to be always with me, you little witch?" he asked, holding her close to him in a half-teasing, half-caressing fashion.



Litzie understood both German and French in her small way, and, consequently, spoke neither the one nor the other, but a pathetic little jumble of both; in which she now gave Klaus to understand that such an arrangement would be quite to her mind.

"It's a pity she isn't some fifteen years older; then I could marry her. I'm quite sure she would have me if nobody else would," said Klaus, laughing as he kissed the little girl and stole a glance at Nina. She did not observe it, and, after a little pause, during which she seemed to be thinking, repeated after him:

"Yes, a pity, a pity!"

Klaus laughed somewhat convulsively.

"Do you really think it such a pity?" he asked Nina, in an almost imploring tone.

"Certainly," said she, with a sigh. "I would give a good deal to make sure of so satisfactory a husband for her as you would make; but one does not often come across such. Poor Litzie will have to put up with something inferior."

She said this frankly and without the least constraint, and as women do speak when talking with men whose future can never deeply concern their own. He had thrown himself down on the grass, and, with his head supported on both his hands, looked up into her face. The child was seated between them. Suddenly, Klaus began to laugh again, a short, dry laughter, somewhat forced.

"What are you laughing at?" asked Nina, and the little one looked steadily at him with her large eyes, with some solemnity and slightly offended. He took her tiny little hand in his big hand.

"Don't be vexed with me, my sweet little pet," he murmured, in his most caressing tones. "I wasn't laughing at you, only at myself—that is to say," and, holding Litzie's hand in his all the while, he looked up to Nina and said: "The truth is, I wasn't laughing at anybody or anything in particular. One often laughs when speech is too difficult. Don't you think so?"

"I—I don't know. Laughter is even more difficult to



me than speech; and, God knows, *that's* often difficult enough for me!" replied Nina, absently, and then she looked at him, saying: "But why, I wonder, should speech be difficult to *you*?"

"Oh, there's reason for it, more or less," he said, in a half voice, passing his hand a few times uneasily over the short grass on which he lay. "It was only—only because you just now said something really kind to me for the first time since we became acquainted; and I did so long to hear something of the kind from you."

"You? Me?" asked Nina, in astonishment, and still without the least constraint. "I have quite ceased to think that words of mine could give pleasure to any one. Besides, you have been so fully taken up with Lizzie and mamma—"

He went on flattening the grass with his hands and became quite red.

"I don't want to say a word against the loveliness of the other two ladies; but, if it is as you say, it is because I never could get more than a very casual word with you, mademoiselle. You have so persistently ignored me during the whole course of our intercourse that I could not help thinking that I am altogether out of the range of your sympathies."

"I am truly sorry for that," cried Nina, sweetly, "and you are quite, quite mistaken. I have thought and felt about you in the most kindly and friendly way, and I don't think I could have expressed myself more clearly in that sense than by saying, as I did just now, that I should be rejoiced if Lizzie could have a husband like you!" And then she added, after the awkward fashion of persons who have long since ceased to take any except the saddest and most serious views of things: "You'd better come in fifteen years or so and tell mamma that it is time you took Lizzie away."

"H'm, h'm," he ejaculated, in a reflective way. "In fifteen years Lizzie will, no doubt, be a most charming creature, perhaps even more seductive than now. But don't you think that I should then be a little too old for the young person?"



"I don't know. I fancy that in fifteen years you will be just as satisfactory as you are now," said Nina.

"Well, we'll leave that question," he laughed. "It is very amiable of you to think so, but"—he took off his cap and laid it beside him on the grass—"but to be quite straightforward with you, I shouldn't like to remain quite so long without marrying."

She looked at him in wide-eyed surprise.

"But, really, I meant no more than a jest in what I said," as kindly as possible.

"I know it; but the jest touched so very closely things that are the most sacred and serious to me that I cannot resist dwelling on them a while."

It was only now that Nina became aware of the singular turn and tone the conversation was taking. She seemed to gather herself together, sat more upright, and her eyes moved uneasily, as though she meditated flight, and yet were chained to the spot by some undefined attraction.

"In fifteen years Litzie will, I fancy, become something like—what her aunt now is," he continued, shyly. "It is extraordinary how the little one resembles you, mademoiselle. Your features, with a mingling of something southern. Was your brother-in-law a Hungarian or an Italian?"

Nina was painfully perplexed, and hardly knew what answer to make. Fortunately, something happened to divert Klaus von Olden's attention. Just at that moment there came along the road a little carriage drawn by a very rough, bristly donkey, with three persons in it. Two of them were singing the "Marseillaise" at the top of their voices; the third blew a horn from time to time. The donkey suddenly took fright at the noise, and galloped on as fast as he possibly could; the little equipage, in consequence, raised such a big cloud of dust that it was scarcely possible to distinguish the faces of the people in it, or anything of them, in fact. The only thing that was plainly visible was the reflection of the light on the brass of the horn. The noise grew louder and louder, until at last the one who blew the horn became entirely



master of the position. This was too much for the donkey. He threw his ears back, set off at breakneck speed, and went straight with all the company, as though it was his deliberate purpose to get rid of them all, right into the ditch by the roadside, which, fortunately for them, was not over-deep and had not much water in it.

The horn flew over the road. And, in the three persons, as they extricated themselves with shrieks and laughter from the ditch, Klaus recognized his good friend Jens Larsen, Mdlle. Stephanie, the famous music-hall songstress that was to be, the temporary sharer of his friend's fortunes, and a certain Monsieur Ménier, a superannuated basso, who was resting on his laurels at Veules, and still called himself Ménier of the Opera. He had, some indefinable number of years before, "created" the part of "the Messenger" in Verdi's *Trovatore*, at the Grand Opera in Paris.

All the three were dressed most fantastically; and what was chiefly remarkable was their hats, when they fished them out of the ditch. Big pointed Japanese straw hats they were, adorned with woolen tassels, blue and red, and as big as a fist.

Before Klaus knew where he was, all three had recognized him and dashed at him, and Mdlle. Stephanie embraced him with just as much hearty freedom as did her two companions; perhaps a little more.

When he had recovered from his momentary stupefaction, he saw two forms hurrying away along the road to the village; one was a tall one, and had a little one in its hand. It was Nina and Litzie, who had fled the scene.

"That's a beauty, if ever there was one!" said Jens Larsen. "But how unkind to bolt from us like that! Have we disturbed you, old boy?" And he clapped Klaus on the back, as he was not big enough to reach his shoulders.

"Yes," said Klaus, impatiently.

"H'm! Very sorry," said Jens, in the most unconcerned way, and thrust his hands deep in the pockets of his trousers. He was made up of that strange combi-



nation of humor and sober steadiness which makes some of his Netherland countrymen so much at home in every situation, and causes others to lose themselves in mysticism and all sorts of crazy speculations concerning ethics and politics.

Presently he began rubbing various parts of his frame, which seemed to be in not quite as comfortable condition as they might be.

"Cursed beast!" he groaned; and then added: "His owner assured us that the donkey could only be made to go if he had some music administered to him, and we did our best for him; and then, because its quality was not on the level of his high artistic sensibilities—you saw it yourself—what does he do but get rid of us all, as if it were a good joke! Well, there's no denying that the donkey has shown that he has the most brains of the whole party."

While Larsen walked up and down with Klaus, chatting, and every now and then rubbing himself industriously, and brightening up the horn which he had picked up from the dust, his companions busied themselves with the task of dragging the donkey and the carriage up out of the ditch and trying to make the crazy equipage fit for the road again.

"A very handsome person, indeed!" said Jens, reflectively, after a while, looking in the direction where Nina's retreating figure was still to be seen. Then, suddenly turning to Klaus: "Widow, or with a superfluous husband?" And his eyes twinkled significantly.

"Neither; a young girl," said Klaus, in tones by no means amiable.

"Really; and the child?"

Klaus became as red as fire.

"A niece."

"Oh, indeed! H'm, h'm! And she's traveling alone with the child—that's to say, with the niece, eh?"

"And her mother."

"Oh, indeed. Better and better. And *you* are over head and ears in love!"



The Dane made a movement with his hand from one ear to the other and then across his eyes.

Klaus was much inclined to box his ears soundly; and, as that was the only answer he could think of and not quite available, instead of answering his friend's question at all, he attacked him, in turn.

"Why have you brought all this crew along with you to vex me? I told you plainly enough that if you wanted to visit me at all, you were to come by yourself."

"To tell you the sober truth," answered the Dane, "I hadn't the least idea that you were still staying here. How should I know what attraction was fastening you to the place? I'm sorry to interfere with any of your illusions, but the fact is that the desire of seeing you was no part of the motive that brought me here. And as to the lady and the other gentleman"—he made a movement of his shoulder toward his companions—"they are to take part in a performance at the Casino to-night, and I've come along to lead the applause. Come to the Casino to-night?"

"I'll take care to do nothing of the kind."

"Well, I'll leave others to do the clapping as best they may and allow myself the pleasure of devoting the evening to you; for, after all, I can't get rid of my old fondness for you, quite."

"Really! It gives me uncommon pleasure to hear it; highly honored!" said Klaus, with a sort of ferocious humor.

"Now, don't you try sarcasm! That's a thing you'll never get on far with; doesn't suit you at all. And it is the simple truth that I'm a good deal fonder of you than you of me; but you are difficult to get on with, very. You can't live in peace with that share of devil that every one of us comes into the world with. In your company we've all got to shove it on one side. And, deuce take it! it isn't every one that can screw himself up to the sort of archangelic pitch of a knight of the Holy Grail that you think necessary."

"Now, Jens, just listen to what I say: I will not have you turn me into caricature like that!" cried Klaus.



"Far be it from me to drag the sublime down into the dust!" said Jens, with a highly comic gesture.

"Now you've gone quite far enough, and you'd better stop."

"For Heaven's sake, not yet! But, what an angry face—what an angry countenance! Say, Klaus, I wish you'd sit to me for an Archangel Gabriel kicking Satan to hell; will you?"

"Perhaps you'd like to take the interesting part of Satan?" asked Klaus, smiling in spite of himself.

"Oh, I don't pretend to any such magnificence, for my part," said Jens, quietly. "*I'm* neither angel nor devil, but an everyday fellow who feels himself quite at home in the world and makes the best of it he can."

"H'm! And I suppose you think *I* am without human feelings because it is not exactly to my taste, in my present far from cheerful state of mind, to go round with this crew here and regale myself with their impish tricks, and loaf away my life as you do."

"Loaf away my life?" repeated Jens, a little more seriously. "Well, we'll just see which of the two reaches the more desirable goal in life, in the long run, you or I."

"I don't see anything particular to stand in the way of my reaching a desirable goal in life," murmured Klaus, with vexation.

"Don't you? Well, I'll tell you, then. Those wings of yours, which you will persist in wearing as you go along, they're worth a good deal less than nothing. You can't reach heaven with them, and they're simply in the way while you *are* on this earth. Sooner or later they'll be broken, and it's a horrible thing to have to drag broken wings about the world which one can't get rid of."

Klaus' head sunk—a breath of cold wind came up from the sea, a cold shiver ran through him. And Jens, who seemed lost in thought, unusually so for him, went on murmuring, "A handsome person, really, a *very* handsome person!"

The two comedians had at last succeeded in dragging donkey and carriage out of the ditch, and got them in



order. They drove up to the two friends, uttering shouts of delight, and made as if they would pull up that they might get in and go on together.

But Jens did not join them; he blew a loud blast on the horn, handed it to them, and remained with his friend.

---

As they walked about together later, the two friends met the Austrian ladies and the child on the quay. The old woman made a movement to Klaus while they were yet a good way off, signifying that he must present Jens to her; and when he did so, asked him in the kindest way whether his friend would not like to join them at the *table d'hôte*.

Which suggestion the friend assented to with the greatest pleasure, excusing himself in a few humorous words for the oddity of his strolling player's costume, as he called it. Klaus had not been without a feeling of discomfort in bringing him and the ladies together, but found nothing to take exception to in the bearing of the painter. Jens behaved quite like a respectable person, was cheerful and amusing without being noisy, and not a word passed his lips which could offend.

The baroness laughed and gossiped and played the hostess exactly as if she were at her own table.

Nina looked very lovely, and was quieter and more melancholy than usual; Litzie was a little excited and entertained them all exceedingly. She made Jens Larsen keep his distance, to his huge amusement, but nothing could coax her away from Olden's lap, and when her dessert was brought her she took and stuffed it all in his mouth.

---

WHEN the ladies had retired, the two friends went along out on the pier to smoke a cigar together. Jens



had suddenly become quite silent. Of the two Klaus was now the more disposed to talk.

"They are charming, my three Austrian ladies, are they not?" he asked his friend, for whom his old warm feeling was reviving again. Jens hesitated before replying:

"Yes, very charming, very charming!"

"All three?" laughed Klaus, a little awkwardly.

"H'm! All three," repeated Jens, slowly. And then he added, much more rapidly: "The only really extraordinary individual of the three is the little one. My stars! If I am not very much deceived, in seventeen or eighteen years she will be one of the most bewitching creatures that ever lost its way in this sinful world. What life and fire there is in the small creature! I should like to meet her again when she's quite grown up. H'm! She has begun soon; she is already in love with you, friend Klaus!"

"I'm quite proud of her favor," laughed Klaus, "but you are rushing to conclusions about her; the little one is very enticing, but, after all, there's plenty of nice children, and one never knows how they will turn out."

"Well, I should say it would take a good deal to prevent that creature from turning out somebody," growled Jens.

"Very likely, very likely," and Klaus snapped his fingers impatiently. "But the other two. I think that the other two were quite worth the trouble of a little attention; the old woman so charming with her extreme amiability, so cheerful, so high-hearted in the midst of her poverty, for it's plain enough that they are poor; and then, so distinguished."

"Yes, a famous old lady," said Jens; and then followed the silence and reflective air which so annoyed Klaus.

"And the young girl?" Klaus began.

"Oh! I say, she is not so young as all that!" cried Jens.

"Why, she cannot possibly be more than two or three and twenty years old," said Klaus, with some heat.



Jens put his hands in the pockets of his trousers and began to whistle.

"She's handsome enough, there's no denying it, but she won't remain so much longer; and there's not much behind her face."

"I consider her most interesting," said Klaus, with decision.

"Well, the remarks she made were of a tolerably everyday kind," said Jens, shrugging his shoulders.

"It is not easy for her to express herself in words, but her nature is deep, full of poetry, full of aspiration," went on Klaus, in his enthusiastic way.

His friend fetched a deep breath, laid his hand on Olden's arm and said:

"My dear boy, you've been creating an ideal little human being out of the superfluous overflow and excess of your own noble qualities. It is *you* who are the deep, poetic, aspiring nature. As to that young lady, if my wits do not deceive, she is only of a confused and befogged mental constitution; and, if one doesn't readily see the very bottom of her soul, perhaps there's some not altogether nice reason for that."

There was a pause, and then he said:

"Who was the child's father; what was his position; what about him?"

"I don't know, we've never talked about it," said Klaus, indifferently.

"Is *that* so? So he isn't talked about, eh? And about the mother?" And the painter looked Olden straight in the face.

"Jens!" cried Olden, and stamped so violently on the wooden floor of the pier that it creaked heavily under his foot. "For shame! for shame!"

Klaus thought his friend would lower his eyes apologetically, but Jens Larsen's gaze remained steadily fixed on him without flinching. Then Klaus turned from him in disgust and made to leave the pier. Jens held him back.

"Stay! do stay for one word!" he said. "Do you remember what I said to you to-day about the broken wings



which some people carry about with them and can never get rid of? If you don't want to break *yours*, buckle together your knapsack and go off together with me this very day back to Veules. And then we'll make a tour together; I'll break away from everybody and everything else, and we'll be together for a little time with nobody to interfere with us."

The two friends stood together for a while in the midst of profound silence; not a sound was audible but the unceasing low moaning of the sea. Then there came, suddenly roaring up, a wave, much larger than the others; it rose high above the sea till its white crest broke and shone in the sun's sinking light; it came up as it were with a joyous and boisterous majesty. Then a moment passed, and where was it? Broken in pieces, all the power of its movement and sound gone; nothing more of it left than a little white foam on the shore; the only sound left in it a small, pitiful cry which was to swell into something more and more triumphant, the cry of some small oncoming wave which was, like the first, to grow larger and larger till it, too, burst; as is the fate of all waves.

"Do you mean to come?" asked Jens.

---

"MOTHER, is the little one asleep? I have something to say to you?"

It is Nina speaking. She has just come in, heated, excited, with a strange look in her eyes expressing something between joy and fright, the strangest mixture of both; her whole frame was full of agitated expectation.

"Yes, the little one is asleep; but how long you have stayed out; I began to be quite anxious about you; I was almost afraid you had fallen over the cliffs," answered the mother.

It is evening and the twilight is falling fast; all is



gray out of doors, no light is visible except the red lights of the Casino; there is a dark white shimmer on the sea, its restless movement can just be caught, but the eye can distinguish no outline in the waves.

Nina has returned from a walk which she took on the pretext of buying some biscuits for the little one. Her mother knew that solitude was often a necessity to her, and allowed her to take her walks without interference. As a general rule she came back with eyes bearing only too plainly the traces of tears; then the mother would sigh, and turn her head away from the misery to which she could administer no consolation. Yes, she was familiar, indeed, with the marks of tears on her daughter's face and eyes, but this strange combination of delight and terror that she saw in the girl's agitated face and shining eyes now was something she was not used to. And it alarmed her.

"What is it?" she asked Nina, peremptorily. "What is the matter with you?"

"Mother," said Nina, putting away the hair from her forehead with both hands, "I met Olden, and he begged me to grant him an interview, and we went on the pier together—and—and—he has asked me to marry him."

"You, you!" the horrified baroness almost screamed, starting from her seat and clasping her hands.

"Oh! quietly, quietly! Don't wake the little one," said Nina, trying to calm her.

"You, you! Oh, unhappy creature, unhappy creature!"

Then there was a painful pause. The mother and daughter confronted one another, the first pale as death, the other agitated beyond measure, frowning heavily and gnawing her under lip. The mother was the first to speak.

"And your answer, your answer?" she asked slowly.

"I—I—begged him to give me time for reflection and promised to give him my decision to-morrow," replied Nina, with something of defiance in her voice.

"Reflection! What is there to reflect about, I should like to know?" said the baroness, in a choked voice.



"Only one answer is possible to such a request as that, and you might have given it on the spot."

"What answer pray, mother?" asked Nina curtly.

"A short, sharp and inexorable *No!*" answered the mother, decisively.

"Indeed, indeed!" Nina had now seated herself at the table; the lamp was lighted and stood there. She played with the tassels of the table cover. "A simple 'No,' without any reasons for it? Is that what you mean?" she asked, in somewhat cutting tones.

"A simple 'No,' without any reasons at all," said the mother firmly.

The daughter's shoulders went up; her movement was like that of a horse rearing under a sudden violent stroke of the lash.

"That is not the view I take of it," she replied. "I think—"

"What can you possibly think?"

"I think I owe it to him to avow the facts."

"Avow, avow! No, Nina, no; you must do no such thing!"

"Why not?"

"Because to do so would be either a piece of folly, or wicked. If he is a mere everyday creature it would be the height of folly to make him master of your secret and degrade yourself for nothing in his eyes; and if he is a fine, exceptional creature it would be wicked of you, for your confession would mean an appeal to his generosity."

The daughter remained seated by the table, her elbow resting on it and her head in her hand; the mother was standing, with her hand on the table. She stood quite upright, and her demeanor was one of inflexible resolve not to depart one hair's breadth from duty as she saw it. She belonged to that class of Austrian women who become greater and nobler in misfortune. Before these trials she might have been taken for no more than a cheerful, lovable woman—now she had grown almost to the proportions of a heroine.

"A challenge of his generosity! A challenge of his generosity!" said Nina, twice, with violence. "Well,



have I not a right to put my fate in his hands and leave it to his decision?"

"No!" replied her mother. "You have no such right. You have no right to break a young, noble, beautiful life by laying on it the burden of yours. It is frightfully difficult to say it to you, Nina; but you have no right to do this, none at all."

"But—" Nina went on playing with the tassels of the table cover, pulling them about more and more convulsively; the mother reached for the lamp and took hold of it to prevent its falling.

"But—but, it is his business—if he could pardon—if he—he—could overlook my past—surely it is not my part—the happiness— Oh! what am I saying? Happiness is not for me—but liberation, liberation from my unhappy position, redemption, safety! If he is willing to give me these is it for me to reject them?"

"Nina! It *must* not be! No! You *must* not think of it!"

The defiant expression became stronger on Nina's face.

"You are hard, mother!" she groaned, and then she passed her hand over her tired eyes. "What is the use of arguing about impossibilities and uncertainties? Besides, it is not even probable that Mr. von Olden, however great his generosity, could bring himself to marry me, under the circumstances; not at all probable."

"No; you are wrong." The mother shook her head. "It is quite probable, quite; such things have happened, frequently happened; I am almost convinced that Olden would stick to his purpose in spite of everything, but you, *you* ought not to abuse his generous impulses. In this wretched business you must show yourself the stronger and more reasonable of the two."

"Strong and reasonable—I?" Nina's arms fell to her sides and she seemed quite exhausted of physical as of moral power; then, shrugging her shoulders, she said: "So far as I understand you I ought not to give him the chance of forgiving me because it would be so bad for him, and any one for whom it wouldn't be bad wouldn't



think of forgiving me for a moment. So that all I am to look for is to go on in my torture and bring up my child for nothing better than a miserable, humiliating existence in which she may sink lower and lower."

The mother was silent for a moment; then she shook her head sadly and said:

"That might *not* be so, Nina. Some elderly man might be willing or thankful to marry you, an experienced man who could measure his sacrifice; or some man who might have become so indifferent to the world that it would be no sacrifice to him at all; and if he were a worthy man, too, I would say, 'Take him, you've a right to do so, and it's your duty for the child's sake;' but this handsome young creature—no, no, no, Nina, don't do it, don't!"

The mother stroked her daughter's arm gently, as if she were quite a little girl.

"Nina, there is one thing, certainly, and it's the principal thing, and I've forgotten to ask you how it is. Nina, for God's sake, speak the truth to me; do you love him?"

Nina took a deep breath, and passed her hands slowly over her eyes, first one hand then the other.

"Love?" she murmured, "love? As if I could do that now. That's over forever—something is dead here"—she pointed to her breast—"something that no one will ever bring to life again! No; but I like him well, more than well; his nature is one with which I am in full sympathy; it does me good to be near him; he produces on me the effect of fresh, health-giving air and a warm sunbeam. My gratitude to him would be unbounded, and I should do everything in my power to make his life a pleasure to him."

"Everything in your power!" said the mother, wretchedly.

Nina was about to make some dry, sharp reply to this, when Lizzie moved uneasily in the large bed where she slept by her mother's side, opened her eyes, and uttered a little dissatisfied cry. Nina went up to her, stroked her little head, kissed and quieted her till the little one, stam-



mering some fond unintelligible words, went to sleep again; then Nina went up close to her mother, and said more softly than before:

“Mother, we must understand one another clearly in this matter. I don’t take the small, selfish views of it that you seem to think. As for the change for the better such a marriage would be for me that weighs little with me; but think of Lizzie. Whether I go to ruin in one way or another, what does it matter? But—the child. If my position remains as now she will grow up without a name, without family relations, without any sort of support in life. What *will* become of her; pretty, as she shows every probability of being? Oh, Heavens! we’d better not try to realize it, either of us. Just think; you yourself say that if some elderly man came forward, one for whom I was not too bad, one not too good for me, it would be not merely my right but my duty to marry, for the child’s sake. But such a man and of such age may perhaps never appear, very probably not, and ought I to throw away the chance of securing a respectable future for my child because of a few wire-drawn scruples? The fact is, we are both groping in the dark: how he would take my confession neither of us can tell—but I hope, I hope, he will forgive, and I *cannot* help clinging tightly to that hope as to a sheet-anchor. A good deal depends upon the way the matter is put to him; I—I—well, it is the truth, the very truth, that never did a girl fall with less of guilty thought or purpose—into misfortune, than I did.”

The mother said not a word; deeply as she loved her daughter it was impossible for her to participate in this way of looking at the matter.

The daughter waited a little, and then knelt at her mother’s feet and put her hand on the old woman’s lap and said, almost in a whisper:

“Mother, you are hard, very hard. Those—those—who have never stumbled themselves are so, all of them; if you think me wicked, tell him so, so far as I am concerned; yes, tell him so, yourself—but tell him, too, how much I have suffered—and tell him, moreover, how



great, how very great a treasure it is he offers me and how deeply, deeply, deeply I feel it, and how grateful I shall always be to him—do it, mother, dear, sweet mother, do it—for the little one's sake!"

The mother remained dumb for a moment, and gazed steadily at vacancy, with a stony, wretched glare in which there seemed a touch of madness almost; then she put the kneeling girl away from her and raised herself, as though every limb pained her, to her feet, and said curtly and in tones expressing unalterable, inexorable decision:

"No!"

And then the daughter, too, gathered herself together, and looked at her mother with a dark and angry look.

"Be it so! If you will not speak with him, I will; yes, I will, even if I die of shame as I speak. I will do it, for Lizzie's sake; and as for him—he will forgive me!"

---

NINA spent half the night in writing letters which she tore up as fast as she wrote them. None of them seemed to her so framed as to insure success, in not one was there that warmth which she was sure would go straight to Klaus's heart. Finally, she tore in pieces the last sheet which she had filled with words she felt to be useless, and determined to sleep upon the matter, if sleep she could. And, after long reflection, she determined that what had to be told must be said face to face: and then she slept.

But Klaus slept not at all that night; he was too agitated, too highly strung with love, hope, fear, expectation, for sleep. And, notwithstanding the ugly words that had fallen from his friend, his pure soul had not been clouded by one moment's suspicion of the truth. The fact is that, in this case, as so often happens, a warning given by one person's dry intelligence to another's warm heart had not only failed of its purpose, but worked the exactly contrary effect. The hint which Jens had al-



lowed himself to give about Nina seemed something so monstrous to Klaus that he could see nothing in his friend's suspicion but cynicism, arising out of the experience in depravity unfortunately gained in the society which the artist had allowed to gather around him for some years. He attributed Nina's refusal to give him an immediate answer only to maidenly reserve and shyness. She had been a little startled, certainly, and had changed color when he told her of his love; but it was not difficult to see that his words impressed her far from unfavorably. But, for all that, it had wounded him in some degree that she had found nothing better to answer his frank words of honorable love, coming so deeply from his heart, than half perplexed phrases: "I feel more honored than I can say by your offer, Mr. von Olden—but I—I—pardon me, I must, I really must speak with my mother before I can—before I can give you a final answer." That sounded so empty, so conventional. He had imagined quite a different issue; if things had been as in his secret soul he had hoped they would be, she would not have answered him with any words at all. There would have been a look, a smile, an almost imperceptible movement of her frame, and these would have been ample warrant of his right to take her in his arms and press his first kiss on her lips. He felt hurt that it had not been so, and then scolded himself for being silly and exacting. What was there in *him*, after all, to justify the supposition that he could have inspired passion so decided as that in a creature so noble, so incomparable? Besides, that sort of unrestraint in love—so he tried to convince himself—did not become a girl of high breeding and careful bringing up; he ought to be quite satisfied if passion took its own time to declare itself in her, slowly, perhaps, but surely and lastingly.

And the hours passed away, one by one, which separated him from his next interview with her, passed slowly, but surely.

The forenoon was already much advanced, and he had seen, as yet, nothing of her. To join the ladies at the second breakfast in the ordinary way, without having



spoken first with Nina, would have been insupportable to him—impossible.

Then it suddenly struck him that, after all, he could not expect Nina to seek him on such an occasion; he must try to take the initiative himself.

He asked the people of the hotel if “the Austrian ladies,” as they were generally called in St. Valerie, were in their room.

“No; the ladies have gone to the Casino.”

He went after them thither; and, while some way off, saw the mother and daughter sitting on the sea-front of the buildings. Litzie was playing with a few other children on the sands. The old woman, who always smiled so kindly upon him when he appeared, was now unmistakably disturbed when she caught sight of him, and Nina was pale as death. He was seized with a presentiment of approaching pain and trouble, but what shape it would take there was nothing to suggest. The hand which the old lady held out to him was as cold as ice and trembled as he held it, but he touched it with his lips as usual, and then said, in a somewhat uncertain but tender voice:

“Has Mdlle. Nina not informed you of the request which I ventured to prefer to her yesterday? Have you not been able to help her to a decision?” he smiled slightly. “She was not able to make up her mind yesterday, but had to take counsel with you, madame.”

He was about to draw the hand of the baroness once more, coaxingly, to his lips, when she drew it out of his somewhat abruptly.

“My daughter has, indeed, informed me of the fact that you—that you—offered her your hand yesterday,” said she now, and her voice sounded strange and curiously restrained. “And all the answer that I can, for my part, give you, is that an alliance with you is what I cannot possibly give my consent to!” These words were uttered in a dry monotone, such as the deaf and dumb speak in; and the sound of them was terrible.

Klaus nearly fell to the ground under the unexpected blow.



"This—from you, madame! from you!" he stammered. "And that is all you have to say to me! All! You say *that* to my face, without one word more?"

"There is nothing but that which I *can* say to you. I entreat you, don't torture me!" she replied, still in the same terrible unnatural voice; then, turning with sudden passion to her daughter, she groaned out: "Nina, you might have spared me this!"

At first he had turned very pale, then he became quite red; he struck the sand in an awkward, aimless sort of way with his stick, and then fastened his eyes on Nina. "And you?" he asked.

She drew a deep breath and looked at her mother, who turned her head away.

"I cannot bring myself to allow you to part with us under the impression of this horrible and unmerited cruelty," she said. "It is necessary that you should be informed why it is that my mother can never give her consent; but I cannot speak with you here. Come."

She led the way with firm, decided step. The mother gazed at them with horror. She felt now how foolishly she had acted; and that, by her uncompromising attitude, what she so strongly desired to prevent she had simply made it easier and more inevitable for her daughter to do.

---

NINA led the young man to the dancing saloon; it was always quite empty at this hour; nobody would disturb them here.

She sank exhausted on one of the divans that lined the wall, covered with red velvet. Klaus seated himself by her side.

"Well?" he murmured.

Difficult indeed was it for her to speak, but at last she managed to say:

"I may not listen to your suit, but I cannot bring it



over my heart to let you think that I do not know how to value aright the treasure of love that you offer me. I cannot become your wife—because I am not worthy of you!”

“Nina!” he ejaculated; his tongue seemed glued to the roof of his mouth.

Her head sank, her voice wavered, and then she said, in firm tones:

“Lizzie is my child!”

That he would recoil at what she had to tell him she had expected and had prepared herself for; but the horrible change which came over his face was something she had not at all imagined possible and taxed her self-possession to the utmost. She had conjured up something quite unforeseen, and was frightened. He became as pale as ashes, bent toward her, supporting himself on the divan with one hand; and he uttered some indistinct words which were quite unintelligible to her.

“You see that anything further is impossible between us,” she said. “I ought to have warded this off. I ought to have spared you this—but I had no idea, indeed not—that anything of the sort was possible. But, as things have turned out, I thought—that I owed it you to tell you the exact truth. I might have kept it back from anybody else, but from you I could not. You ought to know how utterly wretched I am, and—and—how much I could have loved you if it could have been permitted me. I have no other consolation to offer you for the pain I needs must cause you, but I can at least offer that. Farewell, and may God protect you!” She took his hand, drew it to her lips, kissed it, and let it fall. All hope of such issue as she had dreamed of had left her, and with it all the ingenious reasoning with which she had opposed her mother.

She was hastening from the room with her head bowed low, when she heard footsteps behind her, then a hand was laid on her arm—not the light warm hand that she knew, the hand that had seemed always as if it were moved to caress her whenever it accidentally touched her in the performance of some little service or other—



no, *this* hand was heavy and cold, more like the hand of a dead man than a living.

She turned to him; he looked as if he had been smitten with sudden and serious illness.

Twice he tried to speak, and twice he failed, and when he did speak his voice had a pitiable sound indeed.

"How—how—did it all happen. How—who—as you have told me what you have, I should wish to know all?"

He drew her much further back in the room and made her seat herself again, and placed himself by her side with sunken head and his hands between his knees. She told him everything, simply, humbly—all about the morning when her mother arrived just as she was preparing to go to her death, and how she, since, had sundered herself from the world and earned her bread with pain and difficulty, putting by all she could for Lizzie's provision.

She told him all the truth, honestly enough as that truth appeared in her own eyes. But she belonged, poor thing, to the class of women who, however much they may really suffer from the burden of the misfortunes for which they are responsible, can never see that responsibility, but are able only to see their misfortune; women whose privilege it is to find consolation in self-deception, even in the most humiliating circumstances. So, as she put the matter to him, she had been simply a victim, a martyr. He had prevented her leaving him, so hope sprang up again within her. As she went on she looked anxiously for some word from him which should lift the burden of her anxiety from her. And she stopped, from time to time, to give him opportunity to utter it; but no such word passed his lips. He sat by her in complete silence, always in the same position, his frame bowed, his hands between his knees.

She could not make up her mind to come to an end of her story, even when she had said all there was to say; she gave him many a sidelong glance, but he remained dumb. Could it be that, in spite of all the extenuating circumstances with which she tried to make things look better than they were in her sad confession, he did not



find in it the excusing element and atoning temper which she would fain have had him find, and he would fain have found?

Then there came a long pause, and she made as though to rise to her feet.

"As far as I am concerned, I am now broken in to my situation; my own fate concerns me little; but when I look at the child and think of *her* future the very heart in my body seems to break in two. It seems to me sometimes that I *must* take her in my arms and fling myself with her into the river!"

Even then he said nothing. Then she rose, quite exhausted; he made some sort of scarcely voluntary, uncertain movement—but remained seated and let her depart.

Half stunned, scarcely knowing what she was doing, she went back to her mother, who was still sitting before the Casino with an unread newspaper on her knees. When she saw Nina she was startled out of all her severity, so distorted was her daughter's face.

"Well," she began, with difficulty, "have you made your confession to him?"

"Yes, I have told him all—all," answered Nina, hoarsely, with her eyes, from which all the light had gone, fixed on the blue-green sea.

"And he?" Nina shrugged her shoulders.

"What answer did he make?" the mother insisted.

"None!"

The mother recoiled. At that moment she observed a man coming, with dragging, painful steps, out of the door of the dancing saloon on to the shore. She hardly recognized him at first, he seemed a head, at least, shorter than before. He had to pass Lizzie, who was busily engaged with her little friends just then in sticking a red flag on a fortress built with sand.

When she saw him she forgot flag, fort and playmates, and ran to him, clasping his knees. He shrank from her, and freed himself from her grasp with a sort of shudder. The child began to cry; he stood still—and turned back. Then he lifted the little one into his arms,



kissed her again and again, and left the shore with hurried steps. That same afternoon he left the place.

---

THREE days passed. Nina looked like a corpse. She never spoke; she ate nothing; the thought of the humiliation which she had so fruitlessly taken upon herself kept gnawing at her day and night. The poor mother's very life seemed to ebb away with compassion for her daughter. But as for Klaus, her frame of mind toward him changed and was now bitter, even hostile. If she had thought it wrong in Nina to challenge him to so great a sacrifice, she thought it ten times more wrong in him not to have shown for a moment any disposition to make it.

"I overvalued him; we have all overvalued him; he is nothing but an average human creature, after all! Never in all my life was I so mistaken in anybody," she said, and kissed Nina.

Yes, three days had passed. Nina looked like a corpse. And the fourth day was coming to its close. The grandmother had gone out for a walk with Litzie. Nina could hardly be induced to put her foot out of her little apartment. There she sat now, with her head on the table, worn out, in extremity of grief. The sun shone brilliantly; the red flags around the Casino fluttered merrily in the light sea breeze—their color seemed all aglow in contrast with the dull blue-green of the waves, over which the gulls were flying with their strong circling flight. But to all this beauty Nina was dead. She sat there with her head on her arms, in grief too deep for tears.

A step approached her door, she heard it not. There was a knock; once, twice. She lifted her head as if startled from a dream.

"Who is it?" she asked.

"I," answered a voice which she knew and did not



know. The voice was so much thinner than it had been. She started up, breathless, and her heart beat violently.

"Come in," she cried.

And he stepped in. He was still paler, much paler than usual, but otherwise quiet and collected. He looked one who had found the patience needful to bear a great load of suffering without finding any alleviation of the burden in that patience. He made no further greeting, but went up to her and placed his hand on her arm. It was now once again the light, warm hand every touch of which was like a caress.

"Nina," he said, simply, "will you pardon me for taking so long before I could master myself?"

She could not speak, she could only sob and cover his hand with kisses. He withdrew it and clasped her in his arms; she laid her head on his shoulder, and he murmured softly:

"I did not think it open to me to come once again until I could make sure of myself, and be quite, quite certain that I should never torture you, never wound you by any reference to the great misfortune which might have crushed your life forever. We will bury it out of sight for all time, shall we not, Nina? *So!*" and, as he spoke, he pressed a long warm kiss upon her mouth.

It seemed to her as though the burden which she had so long dragged about with her, poor tired thing, had suddenly slipped from her and vanished utterly and forever. But it was not so. One burden had left her, but she had taken upon her another, and this one she had to carry from that moment instead of the old one—that was all.

"My saviour!" she stammered, in her great happiness, still clinging to him, when her mother entered with Litzie. And it would have been difficult to say whether what the baroness felt at what she saw was terror or delight—perhaps both.

"Nina! For God's sake!" she exclaimed.

Then Klaus went up to her.

"Are you quite determined not to have me for a son-in-law?" said he beseechingly, coaxingly, with some-



thing of his old joyous spirits in his glance; alas, only something!

Ah, no! The old glance of those eyes was there no more; they looked like window panes dripping with rain, and suddenly smitten by a sunbeam; a light was there, but no more than a veiled, struggling light.

"Under the circumstances, quite determined," said the mother, in a dull voice.

"Hush, hush!" he cried. "We have passed our word to each other that *that* shall never, never be alluded to. You see, surely you see, that I have not lightly come to my resolve, and that should be some security to you as to the future. Madame—no, mamma, will you not let me at least try to do something to compensate for the world's frightful cruelty and injustice?"

The old woman looked at him tenderly, but she said nothing.

The only person entirely satisfied with the state of affairs was Litzie; but, it must be confessed, not until Klaus, who had at first seemed to overlook her altogether, lifted her in his arms and began to tease and pet her as before. And then there was no end to the kissing and laughing and tender snuggling; such spirits and excitement had not been seen in the little thing now for some days.

"She is the one most deeply in love of all the three here," said Nina, unreflectingly. The old baroness turned away as she heard the words. And Klaus quivered slightly, like a person with a sensitive ear assailed by a discord. His glance fell on Nina across the gold-brown head of the child, and in that glance there was astonishment, reproach. And now, for the first time, he saw that there were little wrinkles in her face and about her mouth something that looked like a premonition of old age.

---

"It was not right; it was not right. You ought not to have accepted his sacrifice," murmured the baroness,



when Klaus had at length withdrawn. "Stop what you are doing, I cannot; but bless it I can just as little, God help me! Ill will come of it, mark what I say—sooner or later—ill, ill, ill!"

There, without, the waves broke unceasingly on the shore—and above the helpless cry and sob that each made as it came up to the shore and struggled and perished rang the hoarse shrill cry of some sea-gull.

---

HE married her—shall we say for love? Nay, rather for compassion; that tragic alacrity of sacrifice and exalted tendency to self-annihilation which so often characterize very young creatures whose nature is tender and deep; and than which there is perhaps nothing in this world so full of danger and so fraught with beauty.

He had entered upon a life of sacrifice, and he was determined that the sacrifice should be entire; he would abate the weight of the burden he took upon himself not one jot, not one jot. Nay, if there was any addition to it that could be made, it should be made. He gave his name not only to Nina, but to her child. He had never hitherto uttered the smallest lie in all his life, either to commend or defend himself; but he now found it strangely easy to put forward falsehood to act as a protective barrier for the lives whose fortunes he had undertaken to guard. And, indeed, it is a peculiarity of idealists of his type that they are so often induced to do things for the love of others which would have revolted their very soul if done for any guilty advantage to themselves.

After long reflection, he came to the conclusion that the best course, indeed the only one open to him, to make Nina's existence possible at all among his own people at home, was to take the responsibility for the child upon his own shoulders, so that Nina might assume the role of the loving wife overlooking, nay forgiving, in her loving magnanimity, a sin of her husband's youth.



It did not occur to Nina, whose breath came freely once again now that her long suspended woman's dignity and honor were restored to her, that the effect of this arrangement would be that Lizzie would cease, to all intents and purposes, to be *her* child. Besides, she and Klaus had settled it between themselves that Lizzie was never to know anything about these legalities and contrivances, and was always to look upon Nina as her real mother.

Of all the things he had done for her nothing seemed so precious and good in Nina's sight as this device for freeing her from the special burden of her past. She was now quite happy. And he? Well, it was not possible for him to be spared the pain which every sincere soul must feel that has to go through life under the burden of a lie, even if the motive of that lie has its foundation in noble, disinterested compassion, in merciful love.

But it was one thing to utter this falsehood and all the details it involved looking straight in the eyes of inquisitive persons, as he so often had to do, and quite another to try to make his innocent conscience feel at home in such a situation, when he and that conscience stood confronting each other in the solitude of his chamber.

He realized this when he went with Nina to Copenhagen, some months after his marriage, to make his wife known to a married sister there, and also to his eldest brother, who held a high official position at the capital. He found himself obliged to utter falsehood after falsehood, and, at last, felt the conclusion forced on him that it could not be a right thing to bring Nina into the confidential relations with his stainless family circle which were immediately formed, Nina being regarded, of course, as of flawless character by them. He, for his part, might pardon and overlook—he had done so—but to introduce Nina under false pretenses into society was a different matter, and that he felt was forbidden to him. And, when these thoughts took possession of him, he began to regard himself as a deceptive person, and the rescue of his wife's reputation wrought by this tissue of falsehoods seemed to him something like a forgery. His peace of mind



began to forsake him, and he did not regain it until he threw up his commission and retired altogether into obscurity. Nina was much grieved at his resolve to do this, but for his sake only. As for her own wishes, it was no sacrifice to her to withdraw from the world. In spite of all the external support of her life, afforded by her new condition, she was so tired and broken in spirit by past suffering that any sort of life now sufficed to satisfy her, liberated as she was from the worst of those former griefs and anxieties. Besides, she never forgot for one moment that she owed all this new peace to her husband, and felt it to be her duty to comply absolutely with all his wishes.

The place which he selected to reside in was a village in Holstein, situate between the marshes and the sea. His old ties with old Ocean were the only ones which he could not endure wholly to break off. The village stood rather high, and was separated from the sea by ground which fell rapidly, almost precipitously, and protected it from the high spring tides. A wooden staircase led from the sand dunes above down to the shore. Klaus knew but little about the village, and was unknown there. The only thing which connected it with his past and endeared it to him was a grave, the grave of his favorite sister, who was buried at Elmstadt. She had been the pastor's wife. It was a love match. He was quite young in his vocation, and his position in life was not up to the social level maintained by her own family. Her brothers and sisters, excepting Klaus, never reconciled themselves to this modest alliance; but he, and his mother, had stood by the humble and loving couple faithfully and fondly.

She had died in childbed, and her husband, who was consumptive, soon followed her. They rested side by side in the churchyard, in the middle of which there was an old-fashioned gray church, with high narrow windows of pointed Gothic, and the walls of which were supported by flying buttresses.

One side of the house which Klaus and his family went to live in looked upon a narrow street and upon



the churchyard which it bounded. It was far from being a melancholy view. Life was far from being a very busy thing with the inhabitants of Elmstadt, so they had plenty of time to give to their dead. In summer time the gray gravestones rose out of a perfect forest of flowers, and there were others, to suit the changing seasons; and the houses of the Frisian peasants, with their high gables, were so situate that from all of them glimpses could be had of this haven of peace, with its wealth of blooms.

This village, or tiny town it might be called, was, in truth, exceedingly pretty, dreamily sequestered, full of character; the houses, without and within, full of old-fashioned and picturesque charm; the walls of the rooms were mostly covered with Dutch tiles, painted blue; the beams of the low ceilings were of the same color, and were decorated with all sorts of little pictures which were nailed to them; the beds, with their flower-patterned quilts, were, generally, placed in alcoves, separated from the room they were in by a framework of carved wood gayly painted.

In the windows of Klaus's house, which took up nearly the whole of the projecting part of the walls, and had very small panes of glass, there stood colored flower-pots, most of which had prickly cactuses, of weird appearance, growing in them, among which there was, in a brass cage, a parrot of extraordinarily brilliant plumage, who screamed all sorts of things in some foreign language with which he was evidently very familiar, but of which the villagers understood not one word.

The houses had little gardens in front of them, in which flowers bloomed late in each season, and only for a short space, but were all the richer and fuller for this brevity of their life; and the village was full of lime-trees which, perhaps, were not so big as some in other places, but whose perfume was all the stronger and sweeter for their small size.

Behind Elmstadt stretched the marshes, covering much ground, and redolent with the perfume of thyme and other wild plants, with a few peacefully grazing sheep



scattered about, mostly coupled together in pairs. The dikes, in which were hedges of white thorn here and there, were carefully tended, and in the distance was a windmill, cutting the horizon with its gigantic red and black sails; and, far below, at the feet of the little town, was the sea with the perpetual lament of its majestic and deep-sounding waves. Klaus could hardly have picked out for himself anywhere a prettier nest to dwell in, certainly none more calculated to lull him into the life of dreamy contemplation, which, under its conditions as he had made them, would be most supportable and satisfactory a life to lead.

But it was far from being easy to him to familiarize himself with such a somnolent type of existence. His spirit did, at last, accustom itself to this tranquil life without action; but, before it did, there were months in which his thought knew, as it were, no sleep, during which he suffered from what may be called a terrible moral insomnia; and these months were frightful. While this time lasted he was painfully haunted by the feeling that his life *might* have been so utterly different in its complexion, and he felt like a soul in prison, like an animal tied to a post grazing all the time in one impassable circle. And he had to keep the most careful watch over himself from morn to eve lest he might give way to bursts of ill temper and passion, of which he knew that afterward he would be bitterly ashamed. He had thought that, before deciding to ally himself with Nina, every pro and con of the question had been fully weighed by him. True it is that his reflections then had been far-reaching and deep; but they had not, after all, fully taken in the reality of things; they took cognizance only of the fancies conjured up by his own idealism. Everything had then seemed so different, so very different! He had imagined that his enthusiastic devotion would last forever, and that the delight of lifting a heavy burden of misfortune from a creature he so deeply loved would endow his existence with a sort of consecrated joy. He had persuaded himself that it was impossible for him ever to look back and regret, to yearn for what



he, then, so fully and freely renounced. And now it was quite otherwise; do what he would, his young life, so full of suppressed power, cried aloud in its every vein, pulse and thought, for what he had then given up.

All this misery was enhanced by the unhappy fact that his love for Nina soon ceased to wear its first impassioned character. In her soul he found, though he searched faithfully, nothing that corresponded to the beauty of her face; and, worst of all, while her unhappiness was on her being, outward and inward, was invested with a certain poetic and pathetic charm; but this was dispelled by her happier circumstances; and he it was who had operated this change. The subdued melancholy, which became her so well and made her face strangely mystical in its expression, he had himself driven away. She soon became a cheerful, amiable, everyday creature, grew stouter, gained a blooming countenance, and—aged, unfortunately, too.

The intellectual interests which she had entertained in her youth, with more of affectation and self-esteem than genuine appreciation, had now died out in her. In fact, she soon grew to be averse to intellectual movement altogether, as she did to everything which had a tendency to agitate or excite her. Every word she uttered, every movement she made, seemed to express, and that to the exclusion of everything else, the satisfaction of a creature, tortured and tried so long, at being at last freed from her load of anxiety and misery and allowed to take her fill of rest and peace. She was a good housekeeper, always looked well and well dressed, and did everything within the limits of her intelligence to make her husband's life pleasant to him. But what he had looked for in this marriage was passion, enthusiasm, an entire merger of the life of each in the other's life—what he had imagined was a deeper and more noble poetry in their relations, overhung as they were by shadows of the past, than could be in conditions of less qualified happiness; and of all this there was nothing, nothing; not a trace.

Her intelligence, in fact, was but mediocre; she had outgrown the exaggerated and too intense manifestations



of such mind as she possessed which had been usual with her in her youth; and that was, so far, to her advantage. But real depth of any kind she had never possessed. He found that, in intercourse with her, he had to suppress rather than express himself; try as he would she could not understand him. She always listened sweetly, but her answers were either beside the mark or quite conventional. It was not long before he was forced to the conclusion that it was indeed as his friend Larsen had said, and that he had created a human being purely and simply out of his own fancy, and that no such being as the Nina of his imagination existed at all.

Still, if she was not what he had expected, she was an amiable, lovable creature, of sweet temper, full of pathetic gratitude, and all this appealed strongly to his sense of duty, so that he did his best to make her happy. And he did so with faithful observance; and, being a man of rare and high personal dignity, he allowed no soul to see or know anything of the disappointment of his life. Whatever might pass within him, no excited word ever passed his lips; none, at least, when his foot had crossed the threshold of his house. Away from it he did sometimes let the trouble within him find a vent in a solitary storm of passion; at home, never.

And, little by little, this internal agitation grew less and less, as is the case with all prisoners who are absolutely without any prospect of freedom. He was one who could never learn to creep; but he did, at last, learn to bow his proud, tall head so as not to hurt it against the roof which was far too low for him, but which he had to live under. And as he soon found some occupation—complete inaction being impossible to his energetic temperament—the monotonous and uniform tenor of his existence soon became a little more varied and satisfactory to him. He soon earned the thanks and respect of the villagers by various measures. He had a little harbor built; he founded a school of navigation for young seamen. He undertook the task of teaching them, at first only to kill time, but the work soon interested him deeply. He was one who could do nothing without throwing his soul into



it more or less, and so it was now. He soon imparted to his teaching a character and a range higher and wider than usual, and read deeply to enlarge his acquirements. He interested himself actively on behalf of every one of his pupils, and took pains to see to the advancement of the young people, and had the satisfaction of knowing that he was doing much good. So that he soon became the object of the warm affection of all the seafaring folk of the neighborhood, and especially of those with whom he came in personal contact. His pupils were ready to go through fire and water for him. He was able to gratify to the full his old passion for the sea. He bought a little sailing boat, with which he often put out very far, sometimes alone, sometimes with a single sailor. Now and again he had to hasten—with what joy!—to the rescue of the crew of some wrecked ship in answer to its desperate signals of distress. On such occasions he was indeed in his element, always foremost, always where the need was greatest. He paid the expenses of the life-boat out of his own pocket, and more than once, in cases that seemed absolutely hopeless, performed prodigies with it in the way of saving people. And the thought of these things kept him up and fortified him. On such occasions he would return home thoroughly fagged and thoroughly satisfied and in a mood thoroughly to enjoy his peaceful and picturesque little home.

And the severely critical estimate of Nina which had been inevitable in the earliest days of his disillusion soon became modified by the fact of that disillusion becoming a familiar thing. He was no longer in love with her, but he grew to be fond of her. After the first year they lived together like people who had been married twenty years, a life of mutual kindness and of peace. Her deep gratitude, inspired by her liberation from her former insupportable condition, operated to smooth all that had been uneven and undisciplined in her temper and disposition; she was gentle, compliant, and full of the little observances and carefulnesses which go so far; and, happily, she had none of the obtrusive tenderness which makes a wife insupportable to a husband not deeply



enamored of her. When he did not wish to talk she let him be silent; if he preferred to be alone she did not go after him to his own room.

Her talent for music, which was her strong point, if she had any, gave him pleasure, and the touch of her soft cool hand did him good. She never complained of her servants, and his meals were punctually served and seen to by herself. It was with her as with many too intense girls, whose mental unrest arises from hysteria rather than from intellectual force or gifts; as she reached riper years she developed quite a taste and skill in cookery. And she found an especial pleasure in consulting all the culinary predilections of her husband, even when these seemed something inconceivable to her Austrian palate. And better eel soup, chocolate soup and red grits than she set before him all Holstein had not to show. She did her best to spoil him, not so much as a loving woman does her husband, but rather like a tender mother does with her favorite son.

And if she did not love him as he had expected, and as a wife *can* love a husband, at least she looked up to him as to some far higher and superior being. It was something that acted like a miracle on her soul, which could never shake wholly off the memory of Tessendy's cynicism, to be in this constant intercourse with a man in the light of whose compassion a sinning creature was thus transfigured into sacredness, one who pitied the broken life of one who had fallen so truly and deeply that he had no eyes for its stains.

---

As far as the outer world was concerned, they may be said to have had, then, no intercourse with it. Letters from Denmark came with long intervals between them; for Klaus's retirement from service, with no assignable reasons, produced an unfavorable impression upon his people which endured. From Austria letters



came with greater frequency. Not infrequently there came from Denmark or Austria a photograph, generally of some new little addition to the family which neither Klaus nor Nina had ever seen, an addition which, as they got in the way of saying, had occurred "after their time."

Nina's brothers both got on famously, and made quite a "career" for themselves and married well. And the blessing of children soon followed for both. The old baroness, who had returned to her own country immediately after Nina's marriage, was the one who wrote most frequently; but the warmth of her affection for her daughter cooled somewhat now that compassion had ceased to keep it up. The sin which had broken down her daughter's life seemed to the mother comparatively venial and had been generously forgiven; but she could not forgive the calculating selfishness with which her daughter had re-established herself at so tremendous a cost to another. She had protested to the last against Nina's marriage with Klaus Olden, and was only with difficulty prevailed on to be present at the melancholy wedding.

The most affectionate part of her letters was that which concerned Litzie, about whom she put no end of questions to her daughter; and she never failed to send Klaus her warmest words of remembrance. And often she sent little presents, which were returned in far ampler measure. Klaus generally went to Hamburg, which was only an hour and a half by railway from Elmstadt, to select these gifts. The first time he went he asked Nina to accompany him, which she, with the gentle compliance now usual with her, did, to please him. But when she saw that he had asked her only because he thought it would give her pleasure she entreated him to let her remain at home. She had become unaccustomed to the excitement and noise of a large city, and it was painful to her to meet strange faces. And, so, she gradually came to feel the warmest and strongest preference for Elmstadt, its country beauties, its true-hearted Frisian people. She loved her house, her garden, her poor



people, for whom she did everything that Klaus suggested or permitted, and it was no little. Klaus was one of those who think that saving is worse than stealing—that is, when the saving is done at one's neighbor's and not at one's own expense; and, as he was tolerably well off and his wants were few, he gave lavishly.

Nina wrote home long accounts of Elmstadt, and, in a shy, respectful way, begged her mother to come and see them. And Klaus, who always thought lovingly of his mother-in-law, always added to hers his own hearty and pressing request that she would come, in a postscript of his own firm, large handwriting. The old woman was always deeply moved by these invitations, and promised to visit them, and never did. She was not actuated by any distinct principle or purpose in this. No! what was done was done; she really intended to come, more than once, but something always happened to prevent it. Her children in Austria were all the time clamoring for her presence, she was continually running from one christening to another, so she had no time left for Holstein; and, as age crept on her, the little troubles connected with the journey seemed to make it more and more difficult for her.

And, as time went, Elmstadt became more and more the center of the world to Klaus. Contemporary problems and questions interested him but little. After glancing at the telegrams he sent the papers which he took in over to the clergyman, who, by the way, was the only person at all on their own level of social standing and education he had to associate with, and who dined with them every Sunday. The magazines, to many of which Klaus subscribed, generally remained uncut. The literature of the time was repulsive to him. He read Zola and Ibsen with all the curious interest of a man of German training, but they gave him no pleasure, quite the reverse.

Like most people who have no future before them, he turned with preference to the past and plunged more and more deeply into the noble creations of the poets who had been the enthusiasm of his youth, from heroic



Homer and the other classics down to the later Romantic school, whose poets, now quite out of fashion, and which when asked for at a book store are quite likely to be handed you in copies all yellow and with a smell of mildew, and to fall to pieces when you begin to handle the leaves. And these "Romantics" he had a special fancy for—beginning with Eichendorf and going as far as Strachwitz. And whenever his soul came into too sharp and wounding collision with reality he regained his equanimity by the help of some of these delightful old lyrics.

He was one of those who stick to the belief that the splendid visions of the poets are founded in truths deeper than the petty minute observations of the so-called realists; although these are truths which only the heart can prove to be such and the understanding cannot. And, indeed, he began to look down with hearty and sovereign contempt upon that pitiful, silly-wise, boastful human understanding altogether, and, with the same feeling, upon every form of man's self-seeking ambition. He despised the world, as most people are apt to do who are shut out from it, and so often said "all is vanity" that at last he came firmly to believe it. Thus he who had had to wage many a hard battle with his discontent at last conquered it altogether, becoming, as he believed, quite reconciled to his destiny and freed from all conflicts within. Over the restless current of his life there had now formed itself a thin crust of ice, so that the stress of the stream still flowing below was a thing which he had quite ceased to take into account, or believe in.

Then—there came a light, warm breathing, as of spring, along the surface of that ice, and the strongly flowing waters below felt that warmth pierce through the covering of ice. And there was danger; but he saw and felt it not.

---

If children had been granted him, Klaus would perhaps not have succeeded with all his efforts in setting



up so firm a barrier of determination against any further active development of his life. But that blessing was denied them. And perhaps for this reason he clung all the more closely to the little being whose protection had been assigned to him by fate. In that earliest and heaviest time of his married life it had always been a tranquilizing and healing thing to him when the little one sprang to his knees, and, clasping his neck with her soft little arms, pressed her little head against his cheek. And as she grew bigger and bigger she came to be the one creature with whom it was true delight to him to pass the time with, the one decided charm of his home, the one source of joy to him when he returned to his home after he had tired himself out with his, often too slow, pupils, or refreshed himself by a stout struggle, in his boat, with the wind and the waves.

And as for the child, she simply worshiped him. When he returned after one of these excursions, his color heightened by the wind, a joyous light in his blue eyes, and with the keen, fresh odor of the sea breeze in his blonde hair, he seemed to her the very embodiment of manly beauty and chivalry. She saw him and him only in all the heroic forms of legend, history and poetry. There was no great deed she read of which she did not think him capable of, from the campaigns of Alexander to the heroic death of Max Piccolomini. If anybody had been there to hear her when she gave utterance to these excessive thoughts and views about him they might have given him no little perplexity. But there was never any one there to smile at her exaggerations and at him; no one to draw slighting comparisons between what she took him for and what he was; so these wild exaggerations gave him no discomfort, indeed, did him good, and gave him a pleasure which he scarcely realized. It became a habit with him to expect this innocent, loving incense from her, and he took it as some compensation for that confirmation by others of his personal merit, the striving for which lies at the foundation of every true man's ambition, but which he had to renounce the idea of obtaining in those quarters which decide such things.



That Litzie's innocent and affecting overestimate of himself went no further in turning his head need scarcely be said; but it was fine and soothing to see so exalted a reflection of himself in the mirror of this pure young soul.

As she grew bigger and bigger the subject of having a governess in the house to superintend her education was frequently discussed. And, after dealing with the question from every point of view and postponing a decision again and again, the idea was given up. The reason they gave themselves and others was that no teacher besides themselves was necessary for Litzie, the real truth being that the presence of a strange teacher would have unpleasantly affected their domestic life, disturbing the even tenor of their uniform and half dreamy existence. And what need was there really of a teacher? The schoolmaster of the village instructed her in the elements of general knowledge; French and the piano she learned with Nina. As to French, the little one absorbed that almost unconsciously, and at fourteen years of age she had quite caught up with her mother on the piano. As to all the rest, that was undertaken by Klaus himself, that is to say, he it was who gave impulse and direction in the formation of her young mind and promoted its growth. He made it his habit to converse with her on all sorts of clever things, gave her the books which she might read through for herself and read extracts from such as she was not yet mature enough for. And it was to him that she brought all her little thoughts and reasonings and views about men and things, the past and the future. And, heavens! how raw it all was, how topsy-turvy, and also how living in its youthful freshness, how original and pathetic! He often took her out for a sail, and at other times for long walks. Nina accompanied them neither on the water nor on the land; she could not stand the sea, and anything like a long walk was burdensome to her. Perhaps, also, she felt that when those two were together she was superfluous. The sailing was delightful, especially in a good stiff breeze; but the walks were still more delightful, espe-



cially in the cool evenings of late summer when the moon was at her full. And that walk, above all, over the wild marshland to the beech forest that lay somewhat more than a mile behind Elmstadt, how beautiful that was, how very beautiful!

There was the moon shining down in her fullness, large, white, out of the black-blue sky upon the gray-green marshland; and, defining the horizon on one side, the windmill, casting its black shadow; and, on the other, the beech-trees, shimmering white, and the night air filled with odors of wild thyme and the damp of earth.

Litzie could not keep step with Klaus, but she tripped by his side like an indefatigable little pointer or retriever. And, in that company, she could have gone on foot from Elmstadt to Hamburg without a trace of fatigue. He told her of all the foreign parts and foreign peoples he had seen on his voyages when young. Sometimes—he could never forget his Romantic school—he declaimed to her some piece from one of his favorite poets, if declamation that can be called that was so little forced, so simple, so interior. And, now and again, he would pause, some line having slipped his memory, and try to recall it.

Whenever he wanted to give her special pleasure he complied with her entreaty to take her into the heart of the wood. She had an almost morbidly active imagination, and was full of courage in the day time, but very timid after nightfall. The moonlight, as it fell upon the dry leaves on the ground and on the white stems of the beeches, made all sorts of ghostly forms in the darkling forest; her breath would come short, her heart beat—but it was so delightful to have that fear when under his protecting charge, and when nothing could happen to her. Sometimes she was so dreadfully frightened that she gave a loud cry, and then he would smile and tap her shoulder or stroke her hair. And, the moment his hand touched her, all her alarm fled and was replaced by an indescribable sense of comfort and well-being. And soon they emerged from the darkling forest and its ghostly sport-



ings with the light, its restless nodding and whispering branches, and were once again in the wide, quiet marsh country.

And every time this happened Litzie had an almost solemn feeling of having some burden taken from her, and breathed more freely. And then they would turn and make for Elmstadt and their home.

And as they returned thither both always preserved silence. The moon was higher in the sky, her light fell stronger on the heath which now began to dampen with the dew and shimmer as with silver. Around them all was still; not a sound except that of the grass trodden by their feet, and from afar, at first very low and rising higher and higher, as they approached, the great voice of the sea.

And, from that sea and that voice there came always, always, to Klaus some message which he could not divine the meaning of, whether it was a call to come or a warning to keep away.

The little one, when she had got back, always before leaving him for her night's rest, placed her soft hands upon his shoulders, reached up to him on tiptoe, and bent her head back to be kissed. And he kissed her every time with the same fond, innocent kiss he had given to the plump stammering baby, stroked her cheeks and her soft, sweet-smelling brown hair.

"Good-night, my little wild thing, good-night, little comrade!" he would say, fondly. "Mind you sleep well."

"Oh, that's fully provided for," she laughed. "Many, many more thanks for the delightful walk, papa; it was lovely, oh, so lovely, papa, and to-morrow we'll go again, won't we?"

"Yes, little woman." He had caught from Nina the Austrian trick of calling her so. "But now, go to bed."

Nina usually lay down on the sofa for an hour or so before this, but always rose to put Litzie to bed; and when she came back to Klaus from the child's room she often had quite a sad expression.

"The little one's feelings are finely strung," said she,



on one such occasion. "I often feel a little hurt that she so much prefers you to me. But I can't blame you for it, she is only too much in the right."

She said no more, and the subject did not dwell long in her thoughts. A little jealous of him she was as she had been of her mother, but with less bitterness. She was so grateful for all he had done for her that she rejoiced in his having the best of everything even this affection of her child for him, so strong that it almost neutralized affection for herself. Lizzie had, of course, no idea that Klaus was not actually her father. And Nina regarded her child's preference as a sort of tax laid by Providence on her destiny in return for the unexpected happiness with which it had been invested in these new relations. The pressure of the tax was felt certainly; but it was a light burden under the circumstances.

---

FIFTEEN years had elapsed since her marriage with Klaus. And the misfortunes foretold by her mother had failed to appear. The lives of both kept the pleasant, even tenor of their way. It was a gray, half-awake, twilight life; and, in the midst of it, Lizzie's fresh young being danced and shone like a sunbeam slipping into a room through some opening in drawn curtains. In Austria, on the other hand, there had been all sorts of change. The severity with which Nina's brothers and sister had viewed their sister's lapse had diminished with the course of years. Her marriage with Olden had naturally raised in their minds none of the distressing scruples felt by their mother; was regarded, rather, as a simple Providential mercy. And this was felt most strongly by the two brothers. Any brother-in-law with a decently respectable position would have been welcome to them under the circumstances. All that their mother told them about Klaus Olden prepossessed them, of course,



strongly in his favor, in spite of his being a North German, of which type of man they, as full-blooded Austrians, had, of course, a holy horror. In consideration of the other fine qualities which were reported of him, they were willing to overlook such points as his pronouncing some combinations of letters hard instead of soft, his using the imperfect tense correctly instead of incorrectly, his waltzing badly, his feeding, principally, on messes abhorrent to the Austrian soul; all which things were, no doubt, attributable to him as to other Northerners.

They were not averse to holding personal intercourse with him and Nina, but no opportunity for it occurred for a considerable time. Then ensued a complete revolution in the circumstances of Nina's younger sister. Her husband came into his uncle's considerable property, retired, in consequence, from the army, and went to reside upon his estates, in Steiermark. This was situate in a charming district, and the estate had a name with a legendary sound. It was known as Unkenstein, and the principal residence was a cheerful and spacious mansion. And as Kaden had a quite respectable income other than the rental of this estate, he was in a position to enjoy it fully irrespective of its rent-roll.

Accordingly, Nina received, early in May, 1892, a letter from her sister inviting her warmly to come to Unkenstein with her husband and child. "In July the brothers will be quite free," she wrote; "we can house you all comfortably at the same time. It will be a regular family festival, and we will have a famous time. How very much I long to know your husband. For fifteen years we have been laughing at mamma's enthusiasm for her North German son-in-law—he will find it difficult to come up to our expectations. Pray send me a good North German cookery book, that my cook may get her hand in with all sorts of Northern delicacies. I don't want him to miss anything when with us. The brothers send you and yours every possible kind of hearty greeting; they are just as happy about you as the mother and I. She is quite as bustling as a young girl, in spite of her seventy years, and just spends her time in going



about from one of us to another; whenever one of us wants a guardian angel she is clamored for directly.

“Pray write and tell us *when* you come, for *that* you come I take for granted. Everything will be ready for you by the first of July. With dearest love, your old Rosie.”

So the letter ended. And there was a postscript—

“We could have you earlier, but then you would have to put up with worse rooms; those we intend for you are just about to be painted. We reckon on you for a long visit, of course. Is your husband much of a sportsman?”

It was late in the evening, about eight o'clock, when Nina received this letter. The shadows were long and pale, the sun was thickly surrounded by clouds suffused by its fires, and all the western horizon was one vast conflagration of sunset and sea. It was the finest part of the day, all earth seemed to breathe with relief as the night came on. Nina read the letter as some prisoner might who after many years receives the papers restoring him to liberty. It was only now, when her sister's dear voice summoned her back to her home, that she realized how great had been her loss all along in the midst of her new happiness, if it could, indeed, be called happiness. Strong tears came into her eyes, and her first feelings of gratitude went out to him to whom she owed this restoration. She folded the letter, rose, and, contrary to her custom, went upstairs to her husband's room. He was just then busy in testing some electrical apparatus which he used in connection with a course of lectures on physics at his school of navigation.

There was something wrong about it. Nina went up to him and put her hand on his arm.



"You here? Do you want anything, my dear child?" he asked, with the sweet kindliness he invariably showed her.

"Excuse me for interrupting you," she replied, "but I have just had a great delight, and as I owe to you all that is good in my life, either directly or indirectly, I could not help coming to tell you all about it."

She bent down to his hand and drew it to her lips; it was the caress she generally gave him. In the early days this humility of his wife's tenderness had first made him ashamed and then impatient, now he scarcely noticed it and took it as it came, as he did nearly everything in their relations to each other.

"Old woman," he said, and tapped her good-humoredly on the shoulder, "what has given you such particular pleasure that you've had to cry your eyes red over it?"

"There; read the letter," said Nina.

He did not at first seem at all desirous of giving himself the trouble of reading the rather long manuscript, and looked as though he would rather have been told about it all. But as she seemed much to wish it he read the letter. When he had finished he returned it to her with a kindly smile and pressed her hand silently. He was too sensitive to express himself more clearly, indeed all his feelings were more subtle and discriminating than hers.

She drew his hand to her lips again, and said, in a low voice:

"Dear Klaus, can you make up your mind to it? Pray, pray—would you like to go with us to Austria?"

Klaus took hold slowly of the back of his neck with one hand, a movement peculiar to him, and said, somewhat uneasily:



"I think—" he began.

"Well, what do you think?" she asked.

"I think your brothers and sister have taken rather long to think it over."

"But, Klaus," said Nina, shyly, stroking his hand which she held in hers, "I ought not to take that amiss under the circumstances."

He shivered slightly and reddened to the very eyes. It was now fifteen years that they had been married—nearly sixteen since she made her sad confession to him—and in all these long years he had never alluded to the matter with a single word. Nina had come to think that it had long ceased to disturb him, and it pained her to see how sensitive he was still about it.

He cleared his throat, and, with a little frown, murmured hoarsely :

"We've done with all that, long ago—it concerns not a soul now," and then he drew Nina to him and kissed her on the forehead. Compassion for her had so long been the leading feature of his regard for her that, the moment there seemed any call upon it, his arm was thrown round her for her protection directly.

His goodness drew tears from her and her head rested for a moment on his breast; then, as though she feared she might be burdensome to him, she stood upright and, putting her hand softly on his arm, whispered :

"But you will come, won't you? They will all be so delighted with you, and you will be quite happy with them."

The frown had not left his brow quite.

"They are strangers to me. I think I'd best keep apart," he murmured. "Of course, I shall make no difficulty about your coming together with your family; go to



Austria when you please; but as for me, I think I had better be left out."

Her tears came fast. "Klaus, without you— Oh! how could I show myself at home without you? There would be nothing in that at all, nothing!" She dried her eyes with her handkerchief. "I will never try to make you do anything you do not like, and shall at once comply with whatever you decide, without a word; that is my course."

With these words she turned to the door; he hurried after her. It seemed to him a hateful and ugly thing that he had not shown more sympathy in her happiness.

"Nina!" he cried, drawing her back softly. "Old woman, have I spoiled your pleasure for you? I've been quite selfish and grumpy."

"Selfish! *You!*" And her beautiful eyes gazed at him with a look of rapture. "You!" and then there came to her lips the word which her heart was always uttering about him—"You, my savior!"

"Nina, Nina! Haven't you got over that intensity of yours yet?" he reproved her, good-humoredly, stroking her hand.

"Oh, yes, my intensity long, long ago," said she, gravely; "but my gratitude it is to be hoped I never shall get over!"

His eyes moistened.

"And you wish so much, do you, that I should go with you to Austria?" he said.

"What I wish, above everything, is that you should not do anything to give you pain," she replied. "The sacrifices I have caused you have been enough already, God knows."

"Why, old woman"—he drew her to him and kissed



her—"of course I will go with you to Austria; it was only that at the first blush I felt uncomfortable at the idea of shaking myself up. We have had such a nice sweet life of it here; and when any one does the same thing, year in and year out, as I've been doing—allowing only for the difference of the seasons—why, of course he kicks against anything that interferes with his everyday habits. It's just like a long-caged bird; if you open the cage he doesn't want to get out of it."

"Yes, Klaus, you are right," she confessed sadly. "I feel something like that, too, and much as I have longed for my home, and greatly as I rejoice that it is opened for me once again, I am glad for all that not to have to take the train and start to-morrow. And, when the time does come, it will be a wrench to us to have to go; but I think that, from every point of view, it would be well for us not to refuse this opportunity of putting ourselves on a right footing with my family."

"I think so now myself."

"I have every reason to be proud of my people," she continued. "Mother, brothers, sister, brother-in-law—all of them are the best of creatures, capable and unblemished. I am the only one in the family against whom a word can be said. And they are all in a very good position. Quite apart from the delight it will be to me to be with those I love, this reconciliation is the first step to the formation of normal relations with the world, for Litzie. Her future is concerned."

"Litzie's future?" He lifted his eyebrows. "What has Litzie's future to do with it?"

"She'll never find a husband at Elmstadt; and I can't imagine Litzie as an old maid."

"An old maid—Litzie!" And his mouth twitched with



a humorous smile. "Nor I, indeed," he confessed, "but that's a good way off still. There's no use in plaguing the poor baby about marriage yet. Just now Lizzie thinks about as much about marrying as she does about dying."

"That's true, Klaus; but we must think about it for her."

"Certainly, old woman; there's nothing like taking time by the forelock."

"Lizzie will be eighteen next May."

"Eighteen! The little rascal—eighteen! How time flies!" he murmured. He had thrust his hands in the pockets of his short house-coat, and was looking thoughtfully before him, with his head down and his feet somewhat apart, as is the way with seamen. "Eighteen years old!" he suddenly repeated, lifting his head. "We shall have some trouble in getting her married."

"Yes," said Nina, with downcast eyes, "the circumstances will make it so."

"The circumstances have nothing to do with it at all," he cried warmly. "She will be difficult to marry because it will be difficult to find a husband good enough for her. I don't mean to let our little savage go to the first comer. Funny little oddity!" And his face did not lose its serious expression.

She lifted her eyes up to him silently and fondly, and then said to him, in low tones:

"I have much to be grateful to you for, Klaus, but there is nothing I have to be so grateful to you from my heart's depths as the kindness you have always shown my poor child. If she were your own flesh and blood you could not be fonder of her."

"I think so myself," he said, and then added, with a



smile: "It's such a meritorious thing, you know, to be fond of the little rogue."

"Certainly she does something to requite your goodness by the most enthusiastic devotion," continued Nina; and, stroking his cheek lightly, she went on: "For her there could be nothing in heaven or earth she could think better, more chivalrous, cleverer or handsomer than 'papa.'"

"Poor little soul! She has never shown her pretty little nose anywhere out of Elmstadt; she has no opportunity of making comparisons. As soon as she goes among people she'll soon get out of those exaggerations. That will be one of the successes of our Austrian journey."

He sighed involuntarily.

"Well, then, you have quite decided on the journey?"

"Yes—ye-es, ye-es!" he repeated thrice with humorous emphasis.

"And the sacrifice will not be too great for you?"

"No."

"What a deal mother will have to say when she sees us. You are just the same, Klaus; you look exactly as you did in St. Valerie, where the mother, after our first acquaintance with you, could think of nothing to say except, 'There's a handsome fellow!' while I—she'll hardly recognize me—when I am by your side I might be taken for your mother."

Her glance fell upon a mirror nearly opposite her, an old-fashioned mirror, in a frame of black wood with bronze rosettes at the angles, which had been hung there before the room was turned into a laboratory for Klaus Olden, and which it had occurred to nobody to remove. It was some time since she had taken a look at Klaus and



herself in that way, side by side; and she was startled by the truth of what she had just said. The years had passed over him almost without a trace; he was perhaps a little broader about the shoulders, perhaps his weight was a trifle more than it had been fifteen years before, but there was not enough in either point to attract remark. His eyes were, certainly, of not so deep a blue as they had been, and his cheeks were somewhat browner; and that was the only difference. His features were just the same in their pure, noble outlines; the firm, sensitive mouth was just what it had been; the curly blonde hair was as luxurious as ever, nor was the first trace of silver to be seen in it.

Nina's hair, on the contrary, had grown quite gray. She was very stout. Her features were still beautiful, but her countenance had grown heavy, especially about the chin, and her skin had lost its freshness.

"Oh, you're never happy except when you are depreciating yourself," reproved Klaus, good-humoredly. "You're quite pretty still, old woman."

"Pretty for an old woman, perhaps. Besides, it's no wonder that I look older than you—I *am* older."

"Oh, really! How much?" he said, jokingly; he had really forgotten all about it.

"Three or four years."

"Really? Well, with such grave persons as you and I, such trifles don't count."

"I was three-and-forty last February, and you are nine-and-thirty," she said, thoughtfully.

"I shall be, on the fourteenth of June," he said.

"My day is over; and the real truth is that it was over when you took me," said Nina. "As for you, any young



girl might fall in love with you and be proud if you returned her love."

"Oh, what nonsense! What have I to do with such ideas?" he laughed, merrily. "You needn't fret about that, wifey."

"I don't; certainly not for my own sake. Don't I know that you will always be true as steel to duty and honor? But—I'm sorry for you, my poor dear Klaus!"

It was a strange thing, she was always thinking so much about what he had given her; every day since her marriage that had been in her thoughts; but it was only this day that she seemed so deeply impressed with the thought of all that she had deprived him of; this day when fate was offering her everything which she had so long secretly longed for; this day when for her there was nothing left to wish.

"Oh, nonsense, nonsense!" said he, much moved, and in soothing tones. "I assure you that I feel just as happy as any man need, by your side. The fifteen years we have been together have nothing but dear and sweet memories for me. You are a little depressed just now; it's the reaction from your excessive joy. It'll be all right after supper. And how *about* supper? I am feeling quite hungry."

"I fancy it must be quite ready now. I told them to lay it in the garden, the night is so lovely."

"Come, then." He offered her his arm, lovingly, and took her downstairs.

The gray house in which the Oldens lived was surrounded by the garden; but at the front, looking seaward, there was only a small strip of it; but, behind the house, it stretched for some distance. The table was at the rear of the house; and it was already set. A



housemaid was putting something to rights at it—a very pretty housemaid, with arms bare nearly to the shoulder, which arms were decidedly fine, though a little red, and who had on a tiny cap which looked almost like a small wreath of tulle, so little and light it was; one could hardly see how such a thing could be kept on her head.

The table, with its three covers, was of inviting, sweet-smelling cleanliness; nay more, it seemed to breathe with the sweetest old-fashioned poetry. In the center, between the three covers, stood a low vase filled with white and blue anemones. Ham, sausage, Holstein cheese, honey, white and black bread, and, above all, Olden's favorite dish, sour cream with pulled bread, were there in profusion. The old-fashioned English china service was painted with broad, dark blue arabesques, and the silver spoons and forks had come to Klaus from his parents; their massiveness showed that those who had had them made needed not to economize in the metal.

"How pretty and comfortable all that is!" said Olden, smiling with pleasure, and, looking a little defiantly at Nina, he said: "Do you do things better in Austria?"

"I have never 'done things,' as you put it, better in my life anywhere; and not anything like so well," replied Nina, in a heartfelt way; she was a little tired.

"Where is the little one, Meta?" she asked the housemaid.

"Miss Litzie went out to the churchyard."

"Will you fetch her, Klaus, or shall I send Meta?" asked Nina.

"I will fetch her," cried Klaus, readily. He stepped along the yellow gravel walk, whose sharp color was slightly mellowed by the twilight, and went out of the



garden on to the road. Right opposite lay the churchyard. Over the very low walls was visible the array of black crosses and white gravestones all about the church, and, against the background, the red-brick schoolhouse with its big small-paned windows.

The flowers in Holstein are not thickly in bloom in early May, but the transparent yellow of the laburnum was already shimmering through the half-opened blue flowers of the lilac, all as yet scanty and transparent. About the crosses there was the perfume of brown-red wall-flowers; about some of the graves there were withered garlands or wreaths of fresh primulas. The lukewarm air was stirred from time to time by the sort of light shiver so often felt in the evenings of spring, a breath of cold which seemed to strike up from the soil not yet warmed through by the summer. The smell of the damp earth was plainly perceptible, mingling with the perfume of the blooms.

By a grave, at the head of which there was a big white gravestone, there knelt a slender young girl with luxurious brown hair which hung over her shoulder and far below her waist in a thick plait. She was busily occupied in smoothing the ground all round it with a little spade, and had, probably, sown it with flower seeds.

“Litzie! Little woman!” cried Klaus.

She turned to him and smiled. For the first time he realized that she was by this time a grown-up girl, and, at the same time, he said to himself that the man whose lot it might be to have the right of folding her to his heart would be a very enviable mortal. Never had he seen anything in his life more charming than the tenderly roguish, big, clear gray eyes with their dark lashes, that looked at him out of the pale, round little face. And,



then, the soft and yet defiant expression in the full under lip; the subtly fine outline of the little nose. To think that one had to bring up a creature to be as big as that only for somebody else to take to his heart and carry off! Well, there was no help for it; it was the way of the world.

"Little woman, come. It is quite time, supper is on the table. What makes you so late here again?"

"Late?" she replied, in her soft, deep voice, like that of some forest song-bird. "Why, that's exactly what I was working for so late, that you might come and fetch me. You always come after me when I remain out too long; but I must say I've had to wait a terribly long time for you to-day."

She spoke very correct German; but there was something in her pronunciation peculiar, foreign, and this peculiarity seemed to cling to her whole person and being.

"It's well I know that," he said, and remained standing near her.

"That you know *what!*" said she, without rising from her kneeling position, and looking up at him over her shoulder.

"What your purpose was in remaining out so long, my little wild thing," which was his pet name for her.

"And what will you do about it?" she asked him, defiantly.

"I'll teach you to leave off running about so long," said he. "I shall take measures for your finding your way back home all by yourself."

"You don't say so!" she laughed, a low, soft laugh, as though she was afraid of disturbing the peace of the graves. "We'll just see who has the more patience,



you or I. If I have to stay out quite, quite late, I won't come in till you call me."

"Silly little thing!"

"If it's silly to be fond of you, then I am silly, very silly, papa."

He smiled, much affected. And, although he had scolded her unpunctuality so severely, he did not seem at all ready to turn and go back with her at once.

"What have you been so busy about here?"

"I've been sowing reseda and lilies round the cross and all about the stone. I say, papa, why do they put such big, heavy stones on the graves? Is it because they are afraid that the dead people might want to get out and go about again?"

"Oh! don't conjure up such frightful pictures," he said, and shook himself.

"The thought just came into my head," she went on. "There were Aunt Rosalie and Uncle Paul, now. And they were fonder of each other than anything else on this earth, *they* would hardly want to come back to life again, now they're together there. How much time was there between uncle's death and aunt's?"

"Six months; but what makes you ask about all this?"

"Why, only because it struck me to-day for the first time how beautiful are the words that are on the cross there." She pointed to the cross that stood at the head of one of the graves, and read with a somewhat raised voice and in a solemn, childlike way:

"'Be not afraid, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by the name that is thine; thou art mine own.'



"Papa, I'm quite certain that if you were to die before me and call me by *my* name, I am quite, *quite* certain that I should hear you over the abyss which separates us poor human creatures from eternity, and I should find my way to you."

"My little wild thing! My darling!" he murmured. "But we'll take a little time to think it all over before we make up our minds to die, both of us; but, now, come." He stretched out both hands to her to lift her up. She sprang up as lightly as a fawn and left the churchyard with him.

"Here you are, at last!" Nina cried, and they seated themselves at table. "Have you told her all about the news we've had?"

"What news?" he asked, helping Litzie to some sour cream. Litzie shared all her papa's preferences at the table, particularly as to sour cream and pulled bread, because they were his preferences, that was a matter of course. Both of them began to devour their portions of this delectable dish with the greatest appetite, while Nina looked on with a slight shiver of objection. She was an Austrian, remember, and this was a North German delicacy.

"Oh, yes! I had forgotten," said he, "we are all three going to Austria."

"Aunt Rosie has invited us to visit her at her beautiful place in Steiermark," said poor Nina, to whom the matter was infinitely more important.

"Oh! are we going to Steiermark?" cried Litzie. She knew the faces, at least, of all her relatives, from their portraits. "Oh, that's splendid! There are mountains and waterfalls there. And when are we going?"

"We're going just as soon as we can get used to the



thought that we've got to pack up and start," said Klaus, joking; "and that will take some time."

"If papa will consent we shall go in July," said Nina. "You must try and persuade him."

"Papa." Litzie looked at him coaxingly and folded her hands in supplication.

He laughed. "Oh, we mustn't be in a hurry; there's a deal to think about. And, as we had better begin practicing in the matter of travel at once, I think we had better make a little excursion to Hamburg as soon as possible. What do you say to it, little woman?"

"Oh, papa!" cried Litzie, beaming with joy.

"And I think," he went on, turning to Nina, "that you'll have to make some purchases for this visit. You Austrian ladies are famous for your taste in dress, and I don't want *my* two ladies to be behindhand in that grave matter. We'll see if we can't transfer my little darling wild flower here into a highly cultivated rose. But I much doubt whether she'll please me better in that guise," he added, in a melancholy tone, taking hold of the little one caressingly by the back of the neck and pulling her thick plaits gently.

Supper was over. Nina had cleared the table and placed cigarettes and matches before Klaus; but he didn't seem inclined to smoke and went on playing with Litzie's plaits.

"Papa," she said, coaxingly, and bringing her chair nearer to his, "if something very nice is played while we're stopping in Hamburg, you'll take us to the theater, won't you?"

"Certainly, little one. And won't the people make big eyes when I show myself with such a pretty daughter there!" he cried.



Nina coughed slightly. "Klaus!" said she, in a tone of reproof.

He laughed. "Mamma thinks that I spoil you too much, Litzie," said he. "Don't grudge me that pleasure, Nina. How long shall I have the chance of spoiling her—to-morrow, or the day after to-morrow, some one else will undertake that job."

"Who? What do you mean by somebody else?" asked Litzie, in astonishment.

"Why, the scamp who will marry you," he said; and there was something acid in his voice. He could not have told why and how it was that he had been led to say this, and his temper seemed ruffled.

"Marry me!" said Litzie, with eyes opened very wide.

"Yes, exactly that person!" he said, teasingly. "Why, we're going to Austria to hunt him up—well, perhaps, not exactly to hunt him up, but, to find him, anyhow."

Nina looked at him uneasily. He was unlike himself; hollow jesting of that sort was something quite foreign to his serious and affectionate disposition.

"The idea of the journey puts him out, that's clear," she said to herself. Litzie leaned her head on her hand with a mutinous expression.

"It's well you've let that out; and, now I know it, you won't catch me going with you to Austria," she exclaimed. "I won't marry an Austrian; certainly not; on no account!"

"Why not, I should like to know?" asked Nina, whose patriotism was roused.

"Why? Because papa—because you two certainly would not go and settle in Austria; and I, well, if I ever do marry, I want to be as near you as possible. Oh!



I've thought it over for a long while, and quite made up my mind."

"Really and truly!" cried Klaus, "you've been settling all about your marriage for a long while? I never should have thought it of you. Oh! these children, these children! Who is to tell what they *are* thinking of?"

His voice was colder than usual. Lizzie was sensible of it and thought he meant to scold her.

"Thought it over," she repeated, in some perplexity, "thought it over! Papa, I only meant now and then, you know, when you've read me some poem or some story where two people were fond of each other, and then—then, I couldn't help saying to myself that—that it must be a very fine thing that, and—and asking myself whether any one could possibly ever be so fond of me that—that; but it was only just as some one might try to think what Paradise was like, something very, very, very far off."

"Still, it *was* Paradise, when you thought of it!" he murmured.

"Oh! don't look at me so gloomily, papa," she said, in tender anxiety, putting her arm round his neck. "Unless I find some one who is very, very like you I won't have him. And, indeed, indeed, the truth of the matter is"—the large tears stood in her eyes—"I can't imagine any life for myself in which you didn't play the first part. No, no! I never will marry—never, never!" She was on her knees before him, flung both arms round him and pressed her little head to his breast. He lifted her up to his knees, whispering to her all sorts of little pet names in North German dialect, which he always fell into when more than usually moved. And



Nina smiled with tender satisfaction that the two creatures nearest to her heart were so attached to each other, and fell to meditating upon Litzie's wardrobe, and whether she had a dress that would do for Hamburg.

---

It was fully a week before Klaus's projected excursion to Hamburg took place. Nina spent it chiefly in preparations for Litzie's toilet, and was mightily afraid that she was altogether too far behind the times for the girl, in that important respect, in spite of her conscientiously steady subscription to the *Journal of Fashion*. As to her own personal adornment, she had long since ceased to give it a thought; she, the once so vain Nina Jewitsch.

From the day when her pride was broken down and her life broken by her great misfortune, she had taken very little interest in her own person. But the child! Nina was quite excited and annoyed by the possibility that there might be something out of the way, unfashionable, in the child for the Hamburg people to notice and make fun of.

"I should be desperate," said she to Klaus, in her most decided Austrian manner and tones, "if the people turned round to look at her in the street."

"As to that you may rest assured; the people are certain to turn round and look at her," he said, laughing, and slightly mimicking her Austrian accent. "But that won't be because of any little thing amiss or out of date in her dress, but because the good Hamburgers never in all their lives saw anything prettier than our little wild



thing. But I'm of your mind that we'd better keep that to ourselves, for there she is.—Little woman! what have you got to say to this?" he called out to the young creature. "Mamma objects to taking you with her to Hamburg; she thinks you haven't any dress good enough for it, and she is afraid the people will take you for a scarecrow." And then, taking Litzie's drolly perplexed little face between the thumb and forefinger of his big hand, pinching it a bit, and turning to Nina: "I really don't know what you're worrying about; the little one can't look better than she does at this moment."

And, indeed, Nina could not help asking herself whether anything could possibly become the child more sweetly than her little percale dress of dark blue, flowing so softly about the slender limbs, the blouse so simply fastened to her waist with a leather girdle, and her broad white sailor collar with its border of simple Holstein lace.

"Well, I agree with you," confessed Nina, after carefully looking over the little figure. "She certainly pleases me best as she is. The only thing I am afraid of is that when you are in among all those tremendously made up Hamburg women you'll have so much to criticise that we shan't please you at all."

"Is that what you think, mamma?" said Litzie, saucily. "I'm not afraid at all. If it should turn out that we are so much behind the made up Hamburgers, papa would be ever so sorry for us; and, then, he'd be twice as fond of us as ever!" And she jumped up to him and gave him a kiss.

"The little puss knows me better than you do," laughed Klaus.

"That's a question we won't go into now," said Nina, in heartfelt tones; "but she certainly has not had all the



opportunity I have had to know and value you for what you are."

"Oh, I've been able to make a pretty shrewd guess about it," cried Litzie, laughing triumphantly, and ran off to fetch a certain woolen petticoat which she had just finished knitting for an aged friend. a certain Mother Erickson, who suffered from rheumatism and was subject to hallucinations. Little Litzie, with that warm heart of hers, loved and was beloved by every one in Elmstadt; and she spoke the North German Frisian dialect so fluently that it made your head swim to hear her, though in her pronunciation there was something of that foreign element which pierced through everything she did or said.

"Are you coming along, papa?" she asked, returning to the garden where this conversation had been held, in a few moments, with a big package under her arm and a big straw hat on her head.

"Where?" asked Klaus, who was lying back in an easy-chair and reading the newspaper.

"To Mother Erickson," cried Litzie.

"No; I beg of you to excuse me," observed Klaus, with dry humor. "Mother Erickson persists in taking me for her son Will, who was drowned twenty years ago, and in stifling me with her embraces, as though I had just come back from all sorts of dangers and from the ends of the world. Deuce take it! I'm fond enough of Mother Erickson in all conscience, but I don't like exposing myself to her tenderness more than need be, to say nothing of the point that it is bad luck to be taken for a person that died by drowning. It means that you're marked out for anything but a dry death."



"Papa!" cried Lizzie, horrified, clutching his arm involuntarily.

"Why, little one! I didn't think you were so silly," he exclaimed. "You don't really suppose that I care anything about such silly superstition? Trip over to Mother Erickson, and we'll have a game of chess as soon as you return. Does that arrangement suit you?"

She laughed at him out of her big, tender eyes, and vanished with her bundle. As she went along she sang, and Klaus hummed the melody after her. "Sweet little rogue!" he murmured to himself; and then, to Nina, who sat opposite him with some needlework in her hand: "Before I let any fellow take her from us I'll look him well over, I promise you!"

"What news in the paper?" asked Nina, looking up from her work.

"Nothing very encouraging," said Klaus. "The Parisians are, of course, following the Russian fashions and have the cholera among them; in Russia it is raging everywhere. It is to be hoped it won't find us out here. Hamburg is an admirable landing place for it."

"Why should it come?" said Nina, reassuringly. "It has been flitting about in Europe for years, but has never ventured to show itself in Germany. I don't think it has been in Hamburg since 1873."

"I am not quite sure," said Klaus. "My sailors have told me some things about it that made me feel rather seriously. Everything, however, seems free enough from it this year, at least."

"Are you afraid of the cholera?"

"Afraid?" he laughed. "Afraid? How can you ask a man such a question? What sort of a man would he be that would confess such dishonorable weakness?"



Afraid! Well, in 1866—we lived in Kiel then—my father, an old man servant and a housemaid all died in the course of twenty-four hours; a sad thing to look back to, indeed. However”—he stretched himself slightly and passed his hand over his eyes in a tired way—“in 1873, when we had cholera on board our ship, I never felt nervous for myself when I attended our sick people. I had a good deal to do for them, and I cannot say that being with them, poor souls, was the most refreshing thing in the world. But, in this world, after all, one can’t consult one’s own feelings.”

“Did many of them die?” asked Nina.

“About fifteen or twenty of the crew, I don’t exactly remember how many,” replied Klaus; “they were sick nearly all of them, and took on board so much brandy, poor fellows, that it was not always easy to make out whether they had cholera or whether it was the liquor that was the matter with them. Then that was nothing to be surprised at. The fellows were all nearly beside themselves with fright, the same courageous sailors who never blenched when we all but went down in a gale of wind. As far as we were concerned, I mean we officers and those who were expecting commissions, we drank our red wine, as usual, and were temperate in all respects and kept cool, and not a man of us was touched. There was only one who died, a middy, a dear, good boy with big stag’s eyes like Litzie. I nursed him till the last moment. Br-r-r!” Klaus shook himself. “It’s all very well to boast of one’s pluck and heroism, but, I can tell you, cholera is not a pleasant thing at all!”

“At home, in Austria, none of us were ever nervous,” said Nina.

“Indeed! then you were mightily to be envied,” said



Klaus, dryly. "I confess without disguise that if the plague broke out here I should be in a terrible fright about the child. The thing does not so easily fasten itself on rational people of our age who are at all strong."

"Well, we are going to Steiermark for the summer," said Nina.

"Yes, that's so, we are going to Steiermark," Klaus repeated, then he laid down the newspaper with a sigh and said: "I wonder what's keeping the child. I'll go and meet her a little way."

---

"AND what shall we do to-day?" asked Klaus, in high spirits, at the Hôtel de l'Europe, in Hamburg, on the second day of their visit; the first had passed pleasantly enough but without anything particular to mark it. In the first hours of their arrival there the noise and confusion of the big city had painfully affected Litzie's nerves, so much so that she signalized her return with Nina to the hotel, after making a few purchases, by bursting into tears. But Klaus soon pacified her, in his fond, teasing way, and she quite recovered herself over the bottle of champagne which he ordered to enliven their little dinner; and then she behaved in such a sweet, childlike, shy, lovable way that Klaus was more delighted with her than ever. In the evening they made an excursion to Blankenese and went pretty early to bed; and this next morning they had risen very early, according to their Elmstadt habit. Consequently they had the dining-room all to themselves. Klaus had opened one of the windows,



and Litzie leaned out and took her fill of the beauties of the Elster. The river gave her the highest delight. Her first agitation had drawn tears from her the day before, as we have seen; now she took everything in with naive astonishment and curiosity. But her little face was all alive with excited feeling, and she became prettier and prettier every minute.

"I have got everything that we want," said Nina, "but the dress I've bought for Litzie wanted some little alterations. It did not sit quite right. It will be here at twelve. And, before that, I should much like to have the little one photographed."

"Would you? Well, and I should like to be there and see that she is taken in some pose that pleases me and not in one the photographer selects."

"Shall I have her taken with the new style of dressing her hair or with the hanging plaits?" asked Nina.

"Both suit her well, but the new city style best, I think; she looks so like a grown up girl in it," said Klaus joking. "Oh, really, I can't recognize my little wild thing at all; she has been turned into a great lady at one stroke!"

"Who has?" asked Litzie, waking out of her dreamy delight with the Elster. "How glorious it was, all golden yellow in the sun, like a monstrous polished topaz; and there to the left, lining the water, dark against the clear sky, the tall trees! Who has?"

"Why, you, Litzie."

"Oh, what nonsense, papa! But aren't we going to have anything to eat. I'm so hungry?"

"I feel something of the same human interest in food myself," said Klaus, looking round at the door. "They



don't seem to expect people to be out of their beds so early here. Ah, at last!"

The expected tea came, accompanied by bread, butter, and ham. Nina poured out some tea for Klaus and Litzie, but took none herself and ate only a small piece of bread. She behaved like a woman much older than she really was; she did everything in an awkward way, finicked about this and that, and seemed impatient and put out by everything she was not used to. She could not bear the food at the hotel, and the monstrous charge for everything seemed to weigh every moment on her spirits. She had had one of the best beds possible, but had slept very badly the night before; and, quite differently from Litzie, she felt duller and less equal to things than the first day. She had every symptom now of a violent sick headache, and Klaus said:

"What shall we do after dinner?"

She replied, quickly: "I think the best thing we can do is to go home; don't you?"

"I fancied you wanted to go and see one of your old friends who is married and settled here," said Klaus, who had begun to enjoy himself, and sought for some pretext for postponing their journey home.

"Oh! that good Jaworsky," said Nina. "I have been informed that she is married to a physician practicing here. But what's the good of warming up old acquaintanceships like that; we should hardly know one another?"

"Well, we might have a little sail in the harbor," observed Klaus, humbly. Then Litzie put her hand coaxingly in his and said, in a half whisper:

"Papa, they're going to play Lohengrin to-night, I saw the bill below in the hall of the hotel."



"You rogue, you! You'd like to see that?"

"Better than anything in life!" declared Litzie, in a funny and dramatically enthusiastic way.

"And you, old woman?" asked Klaus, putting his hand gently on his gray-haired wife's arm. He was very sorry for her at that moment; and, when in that mood, he was especially tender with her.

"Oh, leave me out of it," said Nina, in the irritable tones a person is apt to speak in when half dead with fatigue and stirred up to try and enjoy something. "I've done with all that sort of thing now!"

"Are you not well, Nina?" said Klaus, sympathetically.

"I feel a headache coming on," replied Nina; "it's not so bad now, but I'm sure I shall be obliged to go to bed quite early."

"Poor Nina! What a pity!" said Klaus. "Little woman, we must give up the theater; we must think of the mother first, of course."

"I have a suggestion to make," said Nina, much affected by her husband's exquisite kindness; "let me go back to Elmstadt by the half past three o'clock train, and do you two remain here."

Klaus and Litzie looked at each other.

"Shall we let mamma go by herself?" asked Klaus. "Won't you be nervous in Elmstadt without us?" asked Litzie, with valiant self-sacrifice. "Are you not too unwell to travel alone? You might faint, or something," asked Klaus.

"Why, old man," cried Nina, all her good temper restored, "I shall be safe enough; when I get home I shall just go to bed; and by to-morrow I shall be all right, and enjoy your return and all you'll have to tell me."

"Papa!" entreated Litzie, in a small voice.



“Well, if you’ll promise faithfully to stick to that programme, old woman, we’ll just do as the little one wishes,” said Klaus. “But, say, has Litzie a dress fit for the opera? People do dress up always for the opera, don’t they?”

“What do I know about it?” replied Nina, with a somewhat melancholy shrug. “You speak as though I had been used to that sort of thing all these years. In my time the ladies in the boxes always appeared with bare shoulders at the opera in Paris; but in the seats where I had to go people were wrapped up to the tip of their noses. Litzie has the white crape, which will be here at noon, and that will be quite good enough for the very best seats, and I know that you are one of those who cannot imagine how any one can possibly take a lady to any other.”

And so they settled it.

---

THEY dined early—at one o’clock, after the good old Elmstadt fashion, and then took Nina to the railroad station. They took leave of her affectionately; Klaus kissed her hand again and again and went with her into the coupé to arrange her shawls and things. Litzie embraced and kissed her, affected to tears; but, as the train went off with its roar, they felt as if a load were taken from their hearts. Their spirits rose so that they could hardly contain themselves; it was as much as they could do to walk quietly and not set off at a run. Then, all of a sudden, they began to go very slowly indeed. They exchanged observations about the people that passed, they looked into each other’s eyes and laughed. As to



him, he was in a state of the highest satisfaction, but he said very little, and, as is the case with persons of the highest breeding, even when most excited, his movements after the first moments of excitement were marked by a certain finish and deliberation. But Litzie was in one fever, and her tongue did not stop for a moment. He bent down to her, delighting in her beauty and in the originality which was stamped upon her every movement and utterance; and sometimes he did not take pains to listen to what she said, contenting himself with the music of her gentle voice. He asked her, when they started, where she wanted to go. She had not an idea; all she knew was she would like to "go" all the time, and she wanted particularly to see the pretty shops. Every now and then he stopped with her before some display and made her tell him what she would like to have. She asked, in her sweet, modest way, for very trifling things, but showed the finest taste in her preferences. At last he took her in to a jeweler's and bought her a bracelet, a thick gold chain with a pendant heart which could be opened. She was in the seventh heaven.

"I'll have some of your hair put in the heart—and mamma's," she murmured. Then they went wandering about in a delightfully objectless way, leaving the new aristocratic part of Hamburg for the picturesque old quarters of the city, the houses of which reminded Litzie of English steel engravings of the Hogarth school. Like all Holsteiners, the Oldens had had much intercourse and many relations with England, and Klaus possessed quite a library of interesting illustrated first editions of the previous century.

Litzie was enchanted with these houses, with their stories overhanging each other and one window close to



another, as close as could be, nothing but windows hardly, right up to the extreme angle of each wide, tall gable; and in the windows, with their old-fashioned thick white linen curtains bordered with narrow lace, gay flower-pots all in a row; and, now and then, a parrot screaming in some foreign tongue, the sight of which sent Litzie back to Elmstadt directly.

Here and there an iron arm was stretched out into the street, just as in the English illustrations, with a black boot or a barber's tin shaving-pot hanging to it, the signs of some cobbler's or barber's shop.

Litzie would have given worlds to have a look behind these old-fashioned thick curtains. She pictured to herself the ladies there as going about in cotton dresses with a strong flower pattern, with white cambric kerchiefs crossed over their bosom, and high caps with bows covering their forehead and neck; the gentlemen were, of course, in knee breeches and waistcoats coming down nearly to their knees.

Unfortunately, the inhabitants, at least such as she met on the street, were not at all in keeping with these poetic imaginings. The few women they met wore the most crying, modern costumes of the worst possible taste; and the men—nearly all of them handsome, clear blonde fellows—rather heavy about the hips and knees, though—looked certainly well enough in their discolored work-day clothes; but, there really could be no mistake about it, more than one of those she met was drunk; a thing which highly disgusted the sensitive, delicate girl.

Klaus suddenly became aware of the fact that he was not so familiar as he fancied with the topography of Hamburg, and that, in his curious search for picturesque architecture, he had wandered into districts better



avoided. This was brought strongly home to him by the fact that, in one very "Hogarthian" spot near the harbor, they were suddenly all but surrounded by a small mob of sailors who expressed their admiration of Litzie in rather too powerful Frisian. A single look from him, however, sufficed to make them keep their distance; but, all the same, he thought it best to beat a retreat.

Litzie, who was on his arm, clung a little closer to him than before.

"Do you know what I felt," she murmured presently, "when I was among those strange fellows? Nearly the same sort of thrill as I have so often had in the forest after nightfall. Oh! it is so delightful to be a little afraid, when one knows all the time that one is in your care and quite safe."

---

"ARE you ready, Litzie?" asked Klaus, knocking at the door which separated his chamber from the young girl's; "we ought to start."

They had been back at the hotel an hour or so. Thanks to their explorations for Hogarthian architecture, they had had no time for the projected excursion in the harbor. Klaus had insisted upon it that they must go back before it was late, to refresh themselves with a good meal and a good rest before going to the theater. The young creature displayed the same sturdy appetite at the afternoon tea with cold meat which he ordered—the appetite of perfect health and innocence—as she had done at din-



ner. But he ate scarcely anything. What ailed him he could not have said, but he was a little feverish. Why this should be he had no idea. If anybody had told him that he was excited and annoyed by the bold glances which some men had directed at Lizzie during their walk he would have repelled the suggestion as too cynical and insulting.

"Are you ready?" he called again, through the door.

"Yes, papa. Oh, come in; you can come in now," she cried to him, cheerfully.

He went in—a little hesitatingly, not quite at his ease; how was that, so suddenly? And the sight of the young girl nearly took his breath away. Often as he had taken his delight in the sweet, small face of his little wild thing, how beautiful the child really was he never knew till that moment.

The simple white *crêpe* with the picturesque sleeves, reminding one of the fashions of fifty years before, became her admirably. Her little dark head, with the golden shimmer about the temples and neck, rose bewitchingly from her pretty shoulders and the sweet-smelling frock. He saw now for the first time how fully grown up she really was, and the thought went through him, like a lightning stroke, how soon some one would come to deprive him of her. He felt his spirits sink and his throat tighten.

She was just in the act of fastening the bracelet on her wrist when he entered, and looking up at him, she said:

"Do I suit you so, papa?"

"You look like the dearest little creature in the world," he murmured, with a weight on his tongue. He held a wreath of roses in his hand which he had ordered to



please her—and he could hardly bring himself to offer them to her; all of a sudden they did not seem good enough for her.

“Would you like to have these flowers?” he asked, almost shyly.

“Oh, papa!” she cried, “how sweet and dear you are!”

She took his hand and kissed it twice, thrice, and then put it to her smooth, soft cheek.

“My sisters always used to stick in a flower or two when they went to the theater or a party,” said Klaus. “I don’t know if that’s the fashion now, but it looked very pretty.”

Litzie took a few of the roses, they were beautiful pale yellow Marshal Niels with rich dark green leaves, and fastened them in the light blue waistband of her dress.

“That’ll do, that’s just right, isn’t it, papa? I—I—do I really look nice?” she asked in an uncertain sort of way, going and standing before a long mirror. “Oh! papa, pray, pray push the curtains a little further back that I may see myself better.”

He did what she wished. She examined the reflection in the glass with solemn self-satisfaction.

“I really can’t tell, papa—but, somehow, I fancy—tell me. Am I really pretty?” she asked.

“Whether or no, you please me more than I can say,” he answered.

She sprang up to him, clasped him in her arms and kissed him.

“But, after all, that does not come to much,” she said; “people are always satisfied with their own children; and yet, if I please you that’s more to me than all the admiration of all the rest of the world.”



"You have not tasted any other," he said, almost inaudibly.

"That's true enough," she laughed, "but there's no hurry about that; I can wait."

She kissed his hand again. Her strange excitement manifested itself at that moment in little outbreaks of tenderness of that kind, though such demonstrations were usually foreign to her. In spite of her enthusiastic love for Klaus, she had, as a general rule, and unless extraordinarily moved by some very special occurrence, been content to meet him with a simple "good-morning," or leave him with a simple "good-night." And Klaus was now seized with a feeling of discomfort, of embarrassment, the source or significance of which was quite obscure to himself. He withdrew his hand.

"It is really time, now," he said.

They went. And it was a strange thing. Litzie had been thrown from her bearings, as we have seen, even to weeping, by the first shock of her collision with the dry, noisy realities of Hamburg life; but she found herself at once in her own element in the legendary atmosphere of the theater and the opera. Klaus had told her all about the libretto, while they were fortifying themselves with tea and ham for the delights of the evening. The music she knew pretty thoroughly from the piano-forte score. Of course its beauty was now something quite different and greater when quickened into life by the splendidly vibrating instruments of an orchestra. And it caused a certain intoxication of rapture in her which took her altogether out of the world of realities and seemed to make her actually breathe and live in the very core and center of the legend enacted before her.

Klaus had never yet seen any one so absorbed with



every faculty of sight and hearing in the situations of a drama, so tragically in sympathy with the fortunes of its persons. It seemed indeed as though she was an active participator in actual occurrences rather than a spectator at a theater. When the chorus of swans began she trembled all over, and when the Knight of the Swan came on the stage she shrank into herself with a loud cry.

The Lohengrin of the evening was represented by a foreign artist engaged for this one night at an almost ridiculously high remuneration. This artist was truly great, and a great thinker, and had imbibed the best of the influences of the Bayreuth school, as was plainly visible in his conception of the part generally and in the fine and subtle details with which he worked out that conception. The Lohengrin we all know is a heavy-fatherly, tedious Lohengrin, who never for a moment forgets that he is going to form a connection below him, who foresees with practical worldly wisdom the speedy end to which his worldly career is to come, and accordingly takes the little sentimental episode in his super-sublime career of knight-errantry with exemplary indifference. But the Lohengrin of that night in Hamburg was a sort of archangel, who, having once shaken from his soul the initiation and illumination and vows separating him from ordinary humanity, gave himself up to the "sweet pains" of our usual earthly existence with all the forces of his body and soul. But the exterior of the artist was not at all in keeping with his conceptions and ideals. He was heavily built; his face was round and beardless, and seemed to be robbed of any expression that might possibly be there by its framework of heavy blonde curls which were such as some archangel of the



theater might be supposed to wear. But in spite of these drawbacks, his artistic purpose was victoriously manifest, and his meritoriously high aims were fully recognized and applauded by the audience. His really magnificent singing, coupled with the magic of the music, soon made everybody insensible of the defects of his personal appearance.

At least, it was so with Litzie. Her little head was advanced slightly beyond the box, and her large eyes were fastened upon the singer's lips with subservient fervor. Her color came and went; she was pale and red by turns.

When he cried for the first time to Elsa, in those words that have now become proverbial, and in tones of stern, almost cruel seriousness, "Never art thou to put question to me!" when, under the first influence stealing upon him of human feeling, he repeated these words again, in tones almost of tender lamentation, filled with anxiety as to what her answer would be—Litzie breathed heavily; and when he drew Elsa to his breast, with a cry of exultation containing the whole essence of human happiness at its highest, Litzie's tears would not be denied but flowed without restraint.

"Collect yourself; I should like to know what makes you cry!" said Klaus, correcting her in rather sharp tones.

She looked up at him a little startled, and then laughed amid her tears. "Forgive me, papa!" she said, hurriedly and with all her own girlish sweetness and cheerfulness at once restored. "Fortunately, I'm not the only one who is crying." She looked about her at the people in the front seats of the neighboring boxes, in which there were not a few female Wagner enthusiasts of much



riper years than her own, who were energetically snuffing and wiping their eyes.

Klaus perceived that he had spoken much too excitedly to her. But, from the moment of Lohengrin's first coming on the stage till the end of the first act, he had been suffering tortures. The devotion with which Litzie's eyes were fastened on the singer seemed almost repulsive to him, and he felt almost as though he would like to beat her for it. In his eyes this Lohengrin was nothing but a highly rouged play-actor, and, as a bodily representative of the sublime legend, unendurably awkward, grotesque, unsatisfactory.

The exultation of the other and older ladies, to which Litzie drew his attention, instead of diminishing considerably increased his annoyance. "Yes, it is plain that you are not the only one whose fancy he has taken."

"Oh, he hasn't taken my fancy at all," said Litzie very simply, and not at all disturbed by the imputation. "I only thought that his singing was very beautiful—of course, I don't know much about it, it's the first tenor I've ever heard; perhaps to you it's no better than the crowing in a poultry-yard, but as for me it went to my very heart. It's a pity he's so dreadfully ugly."

Every word she said relieved him of some portion of the weight which lay so heavily on his heart. It struck him with sudden force that he had been guilty of a repulsive, even absurd, offense in allowing himself to be irritated at her enthusiasm. And he could not help thinking how incapable men generally are of sympathetically appreciating the purity of a young girl's virginal heart. And then he went on to reflect how strange it was that men so often go so wide of the mark in ideal overestimation of women of mature years, and so often,



on the other hand, undervalue so decidedly the merits of young girls. And then he sighed to think how very short is the life of the sweetest, purest and best of all the blooms that spring up in female hearts; how, in fact, it springs up, only, as it would seem, to be plucked, broken and thrown aside. And, at the same time, he became unpleasantly conscious of what it really was that had affected him so painfully. The truth was that he had been seized by an immediate grudge against the "fat, painted clown," for his having elicited from her heart this first manifestation of intense feeling. It annoyed him bitterly that he, this stranger, should be the first to make him, Klaus Olden, perceive how deep this young heart was, and to what strange heights of passion it might under some circumstances be inflamed.

In this last single hour the girl seemed to have aged by at least a year—the expression of her face was quite changed.

Klaus observed that her beauty occasioned the same remark in this brilliantly filled house as it had among the sailors in the harbor. One opera-glass after another was directed to the box in which he sat alone with Litzie. The people pulled and nudged each other to point out the young stranger. Litzie saw nothing of all this; she seemed fully occupied in drinking in the delicious acrid perfume of the yellow roses she held in her hand, then she suddenly put them down on the ledge of the box, saying:

"He ought, really, to look like you, papa."

"Who, Litzie?"

"Why, this Lohengrin. Then he would be quite perfect."

---



"ARE you not hungry, or thirsty, Litzie; shall I take you to the refreshment-room?" asked Klaus, in the interval between the second and third acts. Then, before Litzie could answer, the door opened and in stepped a dried-looking, yellow-faced man with scanty black hair plentifully sprinkled with gray and with a peculiar expression of sly humor in his small eyes, which were surrounded by sharp little wrinkles. His face and general appearance brought up unpleasant recollections in Klaus's mind without his being at first able to determine of what kind these were.

Then the stranger stretched out his hand to him and said, in Danish:

"Don't you remember me, Klaus Olden?"

The whole theater turned round with Klaus as if they and he had gone crazy together; the pit flew up to the boxes, the gallery tumbled down to the pit; his forehead burst out into perspiration, and he murmured, in a half voice:

"Jens! Jens Larsen!"

"The same," replied the other; then, with a side glance at Litzie he added: "Am I very much in the way?"

"Why, how can you possibly be in the way; I am delighted to see you again!"

"Oh, well, that's a matter of course, of course; but a man's best friend may be in the way when he's on his honeymoon excursion; and that that's the case with you the whole theater has plainly seen, my dear!"

The blood came up to the very roots of Olden's hair. "The whole theater has made a stupid blunder," said he with difficulty and in a hoarse voice, and then, suddenly speaking in German, he added: "Allow me to present



you my daughter—Mr. Jens Larsen, one of the friends of my youth—my daughter, Felicia.”

It was now the turn of Jens to be startled. He bowed to Litzie and said: “That was a pretty sort of mistake of mine; I took you for the wife of my old friend, made-moiselle.”

Litzie’s subtle though simple soul had from the first moment felt that there was something in Jens different from the hearty goodwill usually surrounding her, and, like the timid half wild thing she was, had drawn closer to Klaus and taken hold of his hand as if for protection. She now laughed in an easy, unconstrained way.

“Oh! I understood,” said she; “I know Danish. Papa has taught it me. It’s too funny!” And she laughed again.

Klaus asked his old friend to take a seat. But Jens did not seem at all at his ease. He had not improved in the article of sensitiveness, and he could not make up his mind to leave his little blunder alone; he recurred to it more than once.

“The whole theater is staring its eyes out at the young couple!”

“Young couple, indeed!” said Klaus, with a touch of ill-temper and impatience, “especially so far as the masculine element in it is concerned!”

“Well, well, my dear. You may not know it, but there’s no denying that you still look uncommonly well; you can play a youngster’s part still with the best of them; nay, better than the best. Ha! ha! you’ve got exactly the same expression of high tragedy on your face that you always had. Do you remember how I asked you at St. Valerie to sit to me for my archangel? What a noble archangel you would have made! And—and, the



pretty widow, or what was she—I forget—the two ladies with a child—you were in love with all three—the child was pretty. What has become of the little thing?”

Klaus sat quite still, feeling just as if he were being whipped with stinging nettles, and in such wretchedness that he almost wished the house would fall, burying Litzie and himself in its ruins.

Jens Larsen sat there stroking his thin pointed mustache; he laughed merrily. Jens had evidently been going steadily on the downward track since he and Klaus spoke last together. The sight of his old friend would have been quite painful to the latter, quite apart from the immediate cause of his vexation. Larsen's health was, plainly, not of the best. He had all sorts of red spots on his face. His eyes shone with unnatural brilliancy; he hacked and coughed, and smelled obtrusively of hot rum-and-water. There could be no doubt that he had just swallowed a stiff glass of grog in the refreshment-room. All of a sudden he struck his forehead with all the stupid absence of self-restraint one sees in people not quite sober, and cried:

“I say, Klaus, you’ve been telling me a colossal taradiddle. It’s only sixteen years since all that which I was talking about just now, and how can mademoiselle here be your daughter; you must have meant your step-daughter?”

Litzie had only laughed at the suggestion that she was her papa's wife, with quite childlike hearty laughter. That notion was too irresistibly funny. But the word “step-daughter” sounded to her like an insult. She repeated it in an exasperated way, exclaiming:

“Step-daughter, indeed! What an idea!”

And Klaus said, with as much self-possession as he



could muster: "I can't help you out here; it is really my daughter."

Jens brought his chair a little nearer, and gave Litzie a good long stare; then a light seemed to dawn on his soul.

At this moment Klaus happened to notice a lady, who must have been handsome some day, who was dressed so as to attract particular remark and whose very lively gestures seemed intended to re-enforce the effect of her dress. He pointed out this person to Jens, saying:

"If I am not mistaken, all that inviting and obliging demeanor is intended for *you*. Pray don't let the lady pine any longer; if I am not mistaken she is quite your style."

It was impossible to show any one the door more decisively. Larsen was all the more ready to take the hint from the fact that the blandishments of the lady in the box opposite were really meant for him, and were not without their attraction for him. He recognized her as the wife of a German artist to whom he had lately shown all sorts of polite attention when she was in Paris. She was among the most conspicuous of the hysterical Wagner enthusiasts, the sort of woman that runs behind the scenes after a performance to fling her arms round the tenor and kiss him, who are half crazy votaries of Nietzsche's audacious doctrines and Bebel's ideal of social democracy, and who go into ecstasies about everybody and everything that belongs to genius, being themselves without a particle of healthy human understanding; the sort of creature that is capable of begging and storing away in her reliquary a bit of bread and butter which some young composer has just bitten off with the intention of devouring.



"Who was that horrible creature?" asked Litzie, with an agitated and trembling little voice, after the Dane had withdrawn.

"One of my friends and school-fellows who has gone to the bad," murmured Klaus.

"How ever did he take it into his head to fancy that I could be your step-daughter?" said Litzie, in high dudgeon.

"I must say, it was pretty strong," said Klaus; "but, as you surely must have seen, he was not quite sober."

Hardly had Klaus brought out these words, which he did with no little difficulty, when something occurred which was like a slight stab in the face to him. As he looked up he saw Jens Larsen's eyes peering intently at him from the box opposite, with an expression of small, sly cunning. Then Jens rested his opera-glass on his nose, the lady by his side did the same, and then they both leveled them at the box where the Oldens were. Then they began to exchange remarks in a lively manner. The blood began to boil in Klaus's veins at the thought of what might come of those two laying their heads together in that way.

---

THE performance was over. The enamored hero had been driven away from his temporary sojourn with mere human creatures, driven away by the petty mistrust and distrust of the very human Elsa, and forced to recur to his exalted knight-errantry and quest of the Holy Grail.

He had just, with many deep sighs, made the confes-



sion which was to separate him forever from that human happiness which is never without its flavor of strong pain. According to all the traditions of the theater one half of the public had, of course, run out of the place before these final utterances of Lohengrin; but those who remained were moved to their utmost depths. That tears ran down Litzie's face unchecked need hardly be said. But even the soul of Klaus Olden had been stirred with emotions quite peculiar and unexpected. He was obliged, at last, to confess to himself that the performance of the "clown" was something quite real and great; and, at the sublime story told by the Knight of the Grail, when he had to reveal his high mission of self-sacrifice in his final confession, Klaus Olden had found that he had some tears to dash away from his own eyes.

"Come, Litzie!" cried Klaus when the curtain had scarcely fallen. And, while the people still remained in the theater, paying their homage of boundless applause to the artist, he slipped downstairs with Litzie. He was deeply depressed. He scarcely spoke a word to Litzie when he sat facing her at supper at the hotel, and was glad when he was at last free to retire and lie down undisturbed in his bed.

Thoughts, feelings, sensations which he had fancied had long since died out of him, came up trembling, quivering, yearning in his heart. He had felt himself young again this night; nay, it came upon him strongly that he had really never ceased to *be* young. He came to see that the contentment with which he had thinly covered the great void and empty spaces of his soul had been nothing but systematic self-deception, during which his deep and real self had kept silent. And, strange as it may seem, there *are* some falsehoods between which and



our conscience accommodations are possible, and which even make the fulfillment of our duty easier to us.

He began to be unendurably restless. A strong, warm spring breeze came along the surface of the ice which held the stream in prison; the ice cracked and burst.

Woe to the poor stream which, too long kept in durance, cannot find room in its narrow bed for its dangerously swelling mass and power, when the hour of liberation comes. That power drives it far, far beyond its banks, drives it with such violence that it seems as though it set forth to encompass and overflow the world. Only, at last—at last, it is doomed to retire within its old familiar limits, with the gloomy thought that it has wrought destruction and desolation. Poor stream!

Klaus had never had a particle of levity about him, perhaps it would have been better for him if he had. The few adventures in port, which, before his meeting with Nina, had made up the sum of his experiences, had been of quite a superficial kind. There had been nothing in them to satisfy or even call up the enthusiasm of which his heart was capable, his tendency to high-flown romance, his capacity to take high flights into the empyrean.

He had so firmly persuaded himself that he was quite done with all that! And now—now he was nearly ninety-and-thirty years old—the husband of a woman with gray hairs, bound hand and foot. And the old yearning came over him again with greater fervor, greater pressure than it had exercised even in his youthful years. It was in vain that he told himself it was all folly, all morbid or boyish immaturity, all utter unreason to suffer like that; that happiness never beat with such strong, warm pulse in real life as in a poem. He could not shake off his



wretched restlessness. The question came up again and again in his breast: Why, why had he, just *he*, been obliged to forego the greatest and highest of all the raptures of existence, those paroxysms of delight mingled with anguish which even angels in their bliss envy mere mortals for! How was it that he, just he, so abounding in the wealth of the heart, had been forced to keep all that wealth to himself and never lavish it on another? There had been days when he had tried his very best to lay himself, and all the treasures of his inner life, at the feet of the woman who might rather be said to bear his name than be his wife. And he shuddered at the recollection of Nina's absolute inability to enter into his exalted thought and feeling, the utter blank of intelligence with which she met him.

He thought of what Jens Larsen had said at St. Valerie:

"It is horrible to have to drag a pair of broken wings about with one all through life, and never to be able to get rid of them."

Hardly had his thoughts recurred to Jens Larsen when his feeling of restlessness and melancholy became mingled with a dull, heavy sense of miserable oppression and discomfort that seemed quite different in kind.

"Oh, what nonsense, what absurdity it all was!" He clinched his fists and buried his teeth in his lips. "This sort of thing *must* be put down at any cost!" He sighed and rose in his bed to put out the lights which were close to his bed—when suddenly a thrill went through him from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot.

In the adjoining chamber he heard a soft, low singing; it was Litzie, humming the melody of the Bridal duo to herself:

"Didst thou not breathe those odors sweet?"



He listened—listened!

There was a gentle knock at the door.

“May I come in, papa?” called a delicate, small voice.  
“Are you in bed by this time?”

“Yes.”

The door was opened and Lizzie stepped in. She had on a very pretty white petticoat, and a little white dressing-gown, with lace borders. Her rich hair was all let down and was flowing over her shoulders, and she had just begun trying to comb it with a tortoise-shell comb, which she seemed to find a difficulty in doing, from its fullness.

Klaus had often seen her costumed so, with her hair let down and the slender round arms shimmering out of the broad sleeves of her little dressing-gown. But this was the first time that the girl's ease with him produced a distinct and special impression upon him. That word which Jens Larsen had spoken came sharply back to him—“step-daughter!” And, with the word, came the thought, more or less distinct, that there was something unfitting, nay, almost unseemly, in her being with him in such a condition. He had no real right to all this sweet, childlike intimacy, to this sweet sight of her in costume of such privacy and with her splendid hair freed from all restraint. What was her boundless confidence, her absolute freedom of manner, what was it all, but the fruit of an illusion in which she had been brought up since her childhood? An illusion, nay, a falsehood! What would she say if any accident were to befall that would open her eyes to the real facts? Why, she would almost die of shame! His breath came with difficulty as he thought of it.

But she came up to him as tranquilly as possible. She



seated herself on the edge of his bed and went on combing her long hair. The blood flew to his head and there came a tightness in his throat. What business had this girl, who was none of his blood, here with him in the middle of the night? And again he saw the eyes of the Dane, Jens Larsen, peering at him with that ignoble, sly, mistrustful look!

"Do you want anything?" he asked, hoarsely.

"No, papa," said she. "But as I heard through the door that you were still awake, I thought I should like to gossip with you a little more. It was all too lovely, and I didn't want to go to bed again without having thanked you more than I have done."

"What for, I should like to know, little mutton head?" he murmured, falling involuntarily into his usual tone with her.

"Well, if you ask me, I really don't know where I ought to begin in thanking you. First, for life itself; and then for the happiness I have in it. I hear of so many people who find life melancholy, and I—well, I have never had one day of sadness; no, not even one hour! And all that I owe to you, all, all to you!"

"And mamma," said he slowly.

"Oh, yes, of course, of course; but that's not the same thing at all," said Litzie. "Mamma is so sweet and good and kind to me; no one could possibly be more tender and patient, no one so good. But, after all, she is not my real mamma."

Klaus was startled indeed.

"Why, who's been talking such nonsense as that to you?"

"Oh, I've known it for a long time. It was Mother



Erickson told me first. I've never said a word about it to mamma; I didn't want to pain her."

Klaus was speechless; Lizzie went on tugging at her refractory, too luxurious hair. It seemed to him as if the very air was filled with danger.

"Now, you'd really better make haste and go to bed," he said, reprovingly.

"Yes, yes, papa, of course, directly I've done with my hair; but I can't get it right to-night at all. Mamma, dear, sweet, good mamma, comes and does it for me every day; I never had to attend to it myself, that's why I'm so awkward; the more I work at it the more jumbled up it gets; and it really is too thick; there, just look, take a good hold of it!"

She pushed toward him the whole soft, odorous brown mass of her hair. He plunged his hand in and grasped it, then withdrew his hand slowly. And Lizzie went on:

"It is so nice to gossip with you; and I never felt in such a way as I do to-day. It really was too lovely at the theater to-night! The music is dancing about in my heart, in my head, all over me. But it was so horribly sad. Ah!" And a really magnificent wrath came flashing from the eyes of the young girl. "How could she, how could she!"

"Who?" he asked, not following her.

"Why, Elsa! torture him so with her distrust. Just think, papa, the whole world believed in him; there was only one creature who dared to suspect him, and that was a wicked woman whom nobody respected, and yet, because this woman spoke against him, Elsa lost confidence in herself, her courage failed, and then she got to mistrust him. Papa, if the whole world was against you—



the whole world—and proofs upon proofs upon proofs were brought up against you, I should take your word before them all!”

She was still pulling at her hair. “And this I tell you, papa: there is nothing in the world, I don’t care how strange or monstrous it might seem, that I wouldn’t do if you told me. If I were standing out there on the cliff, and you were to be below and were to call out and tell me to jump down to you, I shouldn’t stop to think one moment; I should be quite sure that you would catch me safely in your arms, quite.” He lifted up his eyes and looked steadily at her; her large eyes shone bright with enthusiasm, making more marked the pallor of her face. His breathing become slower and heavier. “And then to think that there should be any feeling in this world stronger than my feeling for you,” Lizzie murmured, reflectively, “a feeling that should allure me away from *you*!”

“But you don’t believe there is; it is not long since you declared so positively that you couldn’t think of any life for yourself without me,” said Klaus, incisively.

“Of course, of course—but—”

“Well, what?”

“Something has come over me to-day which makes me fancy that there must be things in this world which I’ve never dreamed of yet. I can’t understand it at all, of course I can’t. If I can believe my own heart, I feel sure that I would rather forsake the whole world for your sake than you for a single person’s sake. Oh! to forsake *you*, to live without *you*!—not to see you every day as it came, not to know the delight of your footstep when you come home, not to be able to think, when I see or read or think of anything nice, ‘I must show papa that, I must tell papa



that!" No, papa, no! You needn't be afraid; I never, never could be so devoted to any one as to you!" Tears rolled down her cheeks. He could scarcely breathe.

Fortunately, she had by this time come to an end of her troubles with her hair.

"And now have a nice, good, long sleep, papa," she said, "and forgive me for keeping you so long awake with my chatter." She knelt down by his bed, put her arm under his neck and kissed him in her fond, simple, childlike way. "Good-night, you dear one, God protect you; and once more I thank you, again and again!"

And so she glided out of the room; the door closed behind her, he was alone. He heard her going about and doing things in her room a while; then murmuring her prayers; then he heard her innocent, regular breathing; she was asleep.

But he slept not; and he knew now that, as long as life should last, never again would he know tranquil sleep, never again.

That look of Jens Larsen, that ignoble, sly, significant look, had produced upon him the effect of a light suddenly held before the eyes of a somnambulist walking in all security at the edge of an abyss.

The somnambulist was startled out of sleep, and the abyss at his feet was revealed to him; his head became giddy, and he knew too well that it was a giddiness that would continue.

And what he caught sight of at the bottom of the abyss was something so horrible that he did not dare to look more closely at it to see what the fullness of its dread presence might be.

---



WHEN he returned to Elmstadt he was a changed creature; but, in the first days, the altered state of soul which he brought back with him from that visit to Hamburg was not of a kind to attract attention or remark. He was only rather restless and stayed within doors less than formerly. He was as amiable as ever with the inmates of his house, and to Nina he was more tender and attentive than ever. It was only in his bearing toward Lizzie that he showed any marked alteration. When he spoke with her he fell into a somewhat provocative and mocking tone, such as he had hitherto been a stranger to, and he made the time when they had to be alone together always as short as possible. But he was, as ever, kind and thoughtful in all he said to or did for her; in that there was no change. So the girl supposed that his altered mood was occasioned by occurrences out of doors with which she was not concerned or mixed up in any way; she was secretly very sorry for him, that was all; except only that she made up her mind to wait with all patience till this displeasure of his should disappear.

But, as time went on, things became worse, not better; and her shy entreaties that he would take her for a sail or out for a walk with him were repulsed with increasing decision and curtness. And the girl became very sad.

It was worse, too, for her, because of the fact that he looked ill and, in spite of the severe constraint in which he held himself; the state of torture in which he passed his days showed itself more and more from day to day.

Every day he came home to dinner with the same painfully forced cheerfulness, boasted of his colossal appetite, and then, after swallowing the first spoonful of soup, sat



before his plate without further touching his food, without saying a word, and with hands all of a tremble. And when Litzie saw him in this condition her soft young heart overflowed with compassion. The pain he caused her was altogether forgotten, and she saw only that he was suffering, and deeply. And it was truly affecting to observe all the little devices and tendernesses by which she tried to divert him from and make him forget his trouble.

When he was away from home she slipped into his work-room, set it to rights, and put his favorite flowers on his writing table; she reminded Nina about his little culinary predilections; mamma had better have this dish, or that, prepared for him, or perhaps he would fancy this other thing. And, in the evening, when she knew that he was in the garden and saw that it would be painful to him to talk, she went to the pretty parlor which opened on to the garden and seated herself at the Bechstein grand, which he had given her on her fifteenth birthday, and played, low and softly, pieces that he had liked best to hear from her hand—sweet, insinuating, lulling music, the Andante of Beethoven, Sonata Pathétique, or the last movement of his Op. 91, or Schumann's Abendmusik.

On one occasion she noticed that he had come to the door of the parlor to listen to her. Her heart beat with pleasure. She went on playing in lower and lower tones and with more and more intense expression. Her playing was uncommonly fine for her years, especially in view of the fact that she had never had the opportunity of hearing great artists and, so, of enlarging her conceptions. After a little while she felt that he had come nearer, and looking round saw him at the door of the



room. It was spring, and twilight is long in Holstein at that season, and there was still light enough for him to see the tender smile with which she greeted him.

"Go on playing," he murmured, and his voice sounded hoarsely.

"Does it really give you some little pleasure?"

"Yes," he said, curtly.

That was enough; she went on with her playing.

After a while she looked round, he was not now standing at the door, but she saw him some little way outside in the garden. He had brought his basket chair near the door and was seated in it, deeply bowed down, with his elbow on his knee and his head in his hand, his whole attitude betokening grief and trouble.

She stepped out and seated herself gently by his side, but not in that close, coaxing proximity which had been her wont. She had not failed to notice that her tender-nesses seemed to vex and annoy him, and all she thought of was to spare him. She laid her hand shyly and modestly on the arm of his chair.

"Papa!" she whispered low.

"What, Litzie?" he asked her, in tones less peremptory and harsh than he had lately used, but in a deadly-tired voice.

She moved a little nearer to him, almost involuntarily. "It's terribly encroaching of me to put any questions to you, papa," she said, in low tones, "but I should so much, so very much, like to know what it is that gives you so much pain; I should be so thankful if I might share your trouble, whatever it is."

"You are quite mistaken," he said, rising with difficulty to an erect posture and gathering himself together.



"There's nothing worrying me. You're spinning cobwebs in your little brain."

"Cobwebs! oh, papa!" She looked at him sadly and tenderly with those large eyes of hers, now streaming with tears. "Can you say such a thing as that to me? When a being like you, one with your inexhaustibly good heart, lets day after day go by and cannot bring himself to say a single affectionate word to the—the people whose very sunshine he is, whose only light and warmth comes from him, how can I help being certain that he is unhappy? He *must* be unhappy, unhappy almost to the losing of his senses!"

He looked up at her almost in his own despite. Was that a child that was speaking to him? Was that the sweet rogue, the playful little comrade with whom he used to have the long walks in the lovely moonlit nights over the silvery, shimmering gray marshes? No! All of the child that was left her was her unfathomable purity and innocence. In all other respects she had suddenly, under the strong pressure of the last days, developed into a mature, noble, great-hearted woman!

"I know that your principal fear is that you may give me pain. You'd rather endure it all and keep it all to yourself than throw a shadow on my cheerfulness. But oh, heavens! how can you hinder it? I would rather bear the worst affliction than see you wearing yourself to death in dumb, hopeless grief. If I cannot take away all your burden, let us at least share it together. I'll take one half and you shall keep the other; two can bear it so much better than one, and bit by bit we shall be able to console each other. Papa, I beg and entreat you! What is the matter with you?"

"Yes, indeed, if I could tell you that, it might fare



better with me!" he exclaimed, more roughly than he had ever yet spoken to her. Her tenderness, the sweetness of her voice, the beauty of her pale, tearful face, nearly deprived him of all his self-possession.

"And you cannot!" she murmured.

"No, and never ask me about it again! Do you hear? never, never!" he cried, violently; then, with something of cutting mockery in his voice: "Remember Elsa of Brabant!"

"Papa, for God's sake! is it then something which—if you told it me, would oblige you to go away from us?"

"Indeed, yes, most decidedly so!" he exclaimed, and laughed an ugly sort of laugh.

She was a little frightened and recoiled for a moment, but only for a moment, and then her pity returned in tenfold strength.

He could have killed himself for the foolish words which had slipped from him with as little intention or purpose as the rattling in the throat of a dying man. And he became anxious, alarmed, almost to madness, by the fear that she might have divined his secret. And it was only, on second thoughts, that he saw how foolish was his fear.

He had raised himself till he was quite upright; he trembled in his whole body, and his eyes had something of the look of a wild beast, hunted down till all the strength had left it, and seeing no way of escape.

She was silent for a moment, and said then, with some solemnity:

"I won't put a single further question to you, papa!" Then she threw herself sobbing on his neck, and clasping him with both arms, as though to fling herself be-



tween him and all the suffering this world could bring, she exclaimed:

“Oh, you poor, poor, dear love!”

For a moment, a quite brief moment, the world seemed to turn round with him. Then, he seized her with a sudden force, just as a person might one he has a horror of, and thrust her violently away from him.

She all but fell backward; she clasped her forehead with her hands, gazed at him with a fixed, helpless look from eyes the very light of which seemed extinguished; and then left his presence with heavy, long, despairing steps.

He had thrust her away violently, as though he had a horror of her; he! of her!

Alas! it was himself of whom he had a horror.

---

AFTER that day Lizzie dragged herself about like a creature distraught. She never uttered a word of complaint nor allowed any one to know anything of what was passing within her.

She fell into a habit of almost unbroken silence, and ate even less than Klaus. At meals she sat in dumb, patient suffering before the plate which she supplied plentifully to avoid remonstrance or persuasion; but she hardly touched the food at all.

Day by day she became paler and lost flesh rapidly; and the look in her eyes became more fixed, that unhappy look of one steadily gazing at vacancy and seeming as though it were seeking for the solution of some



terrible, baffling mystery. She was wholly unable to understand; and because she was unable she went on thus, treading slowly, slowly the path to the grave.

The alteration in Klaus, and above all in his demeanor and behavior to Litzie, became now so striking and undisguised that it could hardly have escaped the observation of a woman much less sharp-sighted than Nina. But Nina very soon made a discovery which, she satisfied herself, fully accounted for the transformation her husband had undergone.

In quite a casual way, and not as laying any particular stress on it, Litzie had, after their return from Hamburg—and before the situation had taken its serious and menacing turn—mentioned Jens Larsen and his rudely obtrusive questions. Nina, who knew so well to what a pitch, almost of unreason, her husband's feelings about dignity and conduct carried him sometimes, could only conclude that the Dane's curiosity, the manifestations of which, at St. Valerie, she had never forgotten, had brought up again all the recollections of her wretched past, and, with them, the feeling that Litzie was not his child but another's, and the offspring of sin.

She told herself that this was not a thing for which he was to be blamed, it was no more than the natural course of events! Sooner or later it was bound to happen. But why, then, had he spoiled the child so that the poor thing could not help feeling the severity with which he now held aloof with all the greater sense of pain and injury? And, think over it as she would, there was something, after all, which remained unaccountable to her, and that was that so sudden and complete a revolution in his feelings and demeanor should have been induced by an occasion so slight and provocation so little. The more her



memory dwelt upon the unfailing and unbounded tenderness which he had shown up to that juncture the less accountable was the whole affair to her understanding. But—but, and here she shrugged her shoulder with painful memories of the past—it was only too clear that he had been seized with a sudden aversion to the child. There was something, she supposed, at the bottom of a man's nature which made that sort of thing inevitable. She was one who knew life and human beings very little, and who never taxed her powers by much thinking over life's difficulties; so she soon gave up all attempts to pierce the mystery and allowed matters to take their own course. She had not the courage to open the subject with Klaus. As each day came she made up her mind, as she supposed, to do so; but, at the last moment, when she was on the point of saying what she had intended, for the purpose of bringing about a complete explanation and discussion, her lips closed, involuntarily almost, and she was unable to utter a single word.

Meantime, Litzie's condition became more serious all the time; and Nina saw plainly that something would positively have to be done for the poor child's relief if she was not to go to utter destruction.

---

KLAUS saw it too, but, think over it as he would and with all the intensity of his nature, he could not see what *could* be done.

As long as it had been at all possible to him he had ab-



stained from giving shape and name to the horrible thing that had befallen him; had refrained from gazing too steadily into the depths of the abyss nigh which he stood, one look at which made him giddy and sick. In the first days after their return from Hamburg he had allowed himself to hope that the crisis was one that would soon pass over, and that, horrible as it was, there was in it, after all, no more than might be accounted for by nerves that had been subjected to too great a strain. He was one in whom every sort of moral disorder inspired boundless horror. And great was his disgust with himself—so great that he became almost helpless in his despair—at finding that the long martyrdom of his married life had taken such a shape as this, and that his fancy or imagination entered upon a path of such peril and terror. He allowed himself to hope that it would be better with him in a little further time. But day followed day, and it was not so. And after that one day when Litzie, with those eyes of hers overflowing with tears, had implored him to let her share his great suffering, since that moment when she had flung her arms about him and he had thrust her from him as though she inspired him with horror, since that day, the fire burned in his veins without ceasing, by day and by night.

He could not endure remaining at home, and he neglected his school of navigation. He spent nearly all the long days of the spring, which were fast lengthening into days of summer, on the ocean in his little sailing boat. It became more and more his custom to put out alone and afar, without the company or the help of the sailor who was regularly in his service.

The seafaring folk remonstrated with him about it, declaring that it was not safe for him to go tossing about



in that nutshell of a boat on that sea; in fine weather it might pass, but suppose a storm came up?

He laughed at them and did exactly as he pleased. And what dangers could the sea have for him, the mere sea?

His thoughts were fixed on that one being only, only on that one; there was room for nothing else in his thought. This one single Lizzie on whom his thoughts thus exclusively dwelt came before him in many, many guises and ages. There was the Lizzie with the badly scratched little round limbs, and with a deep Heligoland cap surrounding her sweet small face, screaming after him and running after him at St. Valerie.

There was a Lizzie, five years old, in long black stockings, in a loose dark-blue dress and with a big red sash round her waist, taking hold of him with her tender little hands and drawing him to the table where she had formed the first sentence she ever put together in her life—with the box of wooden letters he had given her: "I am very fond of my papa." How plainly he saw her before him. How she looks up at him once again! Her head was only just on a level with the table. She looks up at him with a solemn, triumphant look, awaiting the praise which he is sure to bestow on her masterpiece of art; and, in the look, there is a certain amount of roguish coquetry too; she knew well enough what an effect her tender affection had on him. And then how he would take her little person in his two hands, lift her up, smother her with kisses and toss her in the air! And, how *she* would laugh and scream with delight! Her voice was still in his ears; and when she was tired out at last, she settled herself comfortably on his arm, clasped his neck with her little arms, snuggled



her head between his shoulder and cheek, and murmured into his neck, in a voice half sleepy, half roguish, "I am very fond of my papa."

Again; he saw her, once again, as she was on the comfortable winter nights. The sea is raging noisily out of doors; Nina is nodding in an easy-chair, with her knitting on her knees. Lizzie is sitting opposite him under the hanging lamp, in the cozy dining-room with its mahogany furniture and horsehair coverings—Lizzie, and her large eyes are fastened rapturously upon his face and following the movement of his lips, while he reads to her the finest passages, or such parts as her young mind could take in, from his favorite poets.

He saw, once again, when just between childhood and hoydenish early girlhood, she lay ill, very ill, in her little bed with hollow, too lustrous eyes, and little cheeks, reddened with fever. And how many nights had he sat by her side, then, watching, watching; while Nina, quite tired out, was sleeping on her couch in the adjoining room.

Then he saw her, when she was convalescent from that illness, sitting propped up with pillows in her little bed, with her hair nicely arranged, and a thick plait hanging over each shoulder on her bosom, her cheek sunken and her lips protruding, and her poor little lean hands just emerging from the sleeves of her nightgown; and round her neck a little handkerchief of faded pale-blue silk, and on the coverlet before her an open book.

And the smile of delight with which she always greeted him on his coming into the room! What long stories he had told her, what lots of things he had read out to her! And then, when the recovery was slow, slower than was expected, and the physician insisted that she must spend



a few hours every day in the fresh air, Klaus it was who every day carried her down in his arms and deposited her carefully on the couch which had been placed in that part of the garden where the air was best and the perfume sweetest. And he it was who carried her upstairs to her little room again, regularly every evening, where Nina took her from his arms.

Yes, he had spoiled her, guarded her, tended her, as though she had been his own daughter—but she was not his daughter. That one ignoble, sly, suspicious look of Jens Larsen had suddenly struck away from his relations with her all consecrating illusion, the dreams were gone, and the half-light, too; the truth, in all its bareness, was upon him.

And all thought of the child that had been disappeared in the gulf of the past. What he now saw before him was a young girl, in the first fullness of her splendid bloom, with large, profound eyes set in a face pale with spiritual force and passion.

And, again and again, came back her voice to him as she said: "And if I were standing on the cliff yonder, and you were to call for me, I should not reflect one moment, but should leap down to you!"

And what rapture would be that man's, into whose arms she should some day throw herself! How amply would she be able to endow some other with all that he had yearned for so bitterly all his life; all that he had, perforce, gone hungry without.

He lay down at full length at the bottom of his little boat and let it go whither it would. And it went, further, further, further out to sea. And if it foundered, what was that to him?



There was but one rock ahead of him of which he was afraid; only one.

And when he was far from her, far, quite far, when both the mighty sea and the Maker thereof were placed between him and temptation, more than once he gave up the internal struggle from sheer exhaustion; then he gave free course to his imagination, and allowed himself to picture everything that might have been, if—if—?

No; not so. His higher, better nature rebelled even then against such freedom of his thought, and forced it, at the last moment, in other directions. And, at that moment, there would come before him, as if in very presence, Lizzie herself, as she now went creeping about the house, pale, wretched, lean! And that was terrible—that was the worst part of it all.

My God! my God! As for himself, he could bear to the end what must be borne. But to see her wasting her sweet young life away with grief, and not to dare to put out his hand to help her! Oh! that, that! And when he thought of it he laid his head on his arms and sobbed hoarsely, violently, as full-grown men of serious, earnest temper do sob.

Some issue! Some means of escape from this terrible situation! He looked about in every direction, now calmly, now convulsively for it! Some healing, something to tranquilize! But, where—where?

---

ONE day, when he was alone with Nina, he led the conversation of his own accord to the subject of the



journey to Austria. He pressed it on her. *When* could she make up her mind to go? She looked at him with some astonishment.

"Why, it was settled that we were to go in the beginning of July!" she said; and added, "I was afraid that you had lost all fancy for the trip."

"I? Oh, as for me, I shall not accompany you; most decidedly not!" he answered her, roughly.

"But, Klaus, I have had all this out with you before. I cannot go home without you, indeed I cannot, it is quite out of the question!" remonstrated Nina.

"I don't see that at all, not the least in the world," said Klaus, warmly; "on the contrary, I think you ought to start as soon—as soon as possible; it will do the—the child good, too. She looks wretchedly unwell."

"She does, indeed, and I see no help for it," said Nina sadly. "Do you really think she'll improve if I inform her that we are to make the journey to Austria, as soon as we possibly can, and without you? Don't you think she knows quite enough to say to herself, 'We are a burden to papa, he wants to get us out of the way?' You have taken a dislike to her, and the feeling has been growing upon you lately with each day. She feels it, and that is the reason she looks so ill—that, and no other."

"Dislike, dislike!" murmured Klaus. "What a word to use! It is only that she produces in me, somehow, nervous irritability, now and then; that is all."

"Nervous irritability!" repeated Nina, not without bitterness. "She never used to produce nervous irritability in you. As long as you were alone with us and the goodness of God, everything went well. But it only needed that a few hard and cruel eyes of the people of



the world should direct themselves full on you—only that, for the whole edifice to fall in ruins. You were ashamed. Yes, after nearly sixteen years, you were ashamed of your own kindness, of your own goodness! And now you are ashamed of the child, just as you are ashamed that you—that you—oh, Klaus, Klaus! Was it worth while our doing everything—your doing everything, more than everything, for fifteen long years to make a heaven on earth for us, if you were in the end to make us so very, very wretched? I *cannot* understand you. I cannot make one piece of your dealings with us at all. You are quite changed. Now and then, I fancy that some evil spirit must have come and taken possession of you!”

He cleared his throat once or twice, as though he were going to say something; but he could not utter a word. And, at last, he left her without having said anything whatever. She heard him ascending the stairs with heavy footsteps, she heard him going into his work-room, she heard him turn the key in the lock when he had crossed its threshold.

---

It was night, after this scene, and about ten o'clock. The pale summer twilight of the north enveloped everything; in the eastern horizon there was a full moon, with no light in it yet, as yet nothing but a large red circle gliding slowly among masses of gray clouds.

Klaus went out into the garden for a solitary walk. Nina came out and joined him abruptly.



"Klaus!" she said, in a low, beseeching voice.

"What is the matter?" he asked, quite gently; he took pains to be gentle always with her; in that respect he was what he always had been.

"God help me! Lizzie causes me inexpressible anxiety. I don't want to hurt you by any reproaches, indeed not. I see, indeed, how earnestly you struggle with yourself, and how much the struggle costs you, not to show your aversion. But the aversion is there; there is no mistaking that. If you had not spoiled her so irrationally before, she would not have felt the difference in you now so terribly. But as things are, she—she—she's dying of it." Nina burst into tears.

"My poor Nina! You see things too darkly. The little one will come all right; she is a little out of condition; we all are; it's nothing more than that."

"A little out of condition—nothing more?" Nina wrung her hands. "Just now, after supper, I tried to induce her to agree to our going to Austria without you. And where is she now? She's out there in the churchyard, crouching down by the grave of your sister! I've gone out three times to fetch her back home, and I can do nothing with her. I *cannot* get her away. I entreat you, Klaus, go and fetch her."

He stood suddenly still, in the middle of the garden-path bordered by lilacs; it was there that Nina had come to join him. She saw how he trembled and almost recoiled.

"I cannot," he murmured. "And one ought not to humor her obstinacy."

"Obstinacy!" repeated Nina, her clasped hands moving convulsively. "The poor creature is just simply in despair! I don't know what to do with her; I don't, in-



deed. I am all the time afraid, more and more afraid, that she will lose her reason or do herself some mischief. Is it possible that you see nothing of all this, Klaus? You, who used to be the tenderest-hearted, warmest-hearted creature in the whole world?"

He stood there like a man turned to stone. She lifted up her hands and went on more and more urgently: "Klaus, I implore you, not for my sake, not for her sake, for your own sake, for God's own sake, master yourself—only for a few, few days, and do be a little kind to her. Just as soon as you've helped her to get a little peace of mind and self-possession I'll go away with her—I'll pretend that you're going to follow us, I'll make any pretext you please, I'll put up with the humiliation of going back to my people without you. I will, without a word—but do, do have some pity for the poor child! Go, I entreat you, Klaus, do go and fetch her and bring her home!"

He stood there a few moment longer, saying not one word, and with a set, fixed look. And then he went, very slowly, with hesitating steps. Nor did he go by the straightest path; he went by the paths which would make it as long as possible before he reached the little side gate in the garden wall leading out into the road; but, at last, he came to the gate.

---

NEVER had Nina seen a human creature whose bearing indicated such strong repulsion to the carrying out of a formed purpose. She was almost inclined to call



him back. Perhaps he would ill-treat the child; perhaps he would want to drag her away with force from the grave! Perhaps she had been in the wrong in forcing him to do what he so evidently shrunk from!

She was on the point of calling him back, when the little gate closed upon him and he was gone.

Her heart began to beat with terrible violence, with dull, strong, heavy strokes that made it almost impossible for her to breathe, and a sense of impending misfortune came upon her, an obscure presentiment of something fearful; God alone could know—*what!*

---

KLAUS stopped at the little low, whitewashed gate of the churchyard, and looked into it. The churchyard lay before him in the half-light, filled with the perfume of roses. And the light was transparent, almost a white light, almost as much so as that which, on early summer mornings, heralds the full splendors of the sunrise.

There, between the cold gravestones and the crosses, around which bloomed rosebushes and jasmines, there lay, half upon and half beside the grave of his sister, something whose outlines he could not clearly make out.

Klaus bent forward, as though to catch some sounds of grief that might come to him, of tears or sobs; but not a sound was audible. Everything above the earth there was as still and soundless as in the graves below; he could hear nothing except the slight, scarcely perceptible sound made by some withered rose as its leaves fell scattering to the ground, and, in the distance, the monotonous, ever-



ascending, ever-falling sound made by the complaining sea.

That "something" by the grave of his sister uttered no sound; not one—none at all!

A sudden terror seized him. "Felicia!" he cried. Nothing stirred. "Felicia! Lizzie! Little woman!" Not a movement, not a sound. Then he pushed the little gate back and went in. The gravel made a crunching noise under his feet. As he came nearer and nearer, and the sweet, pure form by the grave became more and more distinct, he became more and more possessed by a feeling of inexpressible sadness and boundless, impending misfortune; there was something in the girl's frame indicative of utter failure of power, of a misery that had overpowered her. "Lizzie!" he murmured, in a hoarse whisper. No answer. Then he bent down to her, and took hold of her arm, that young arm not long ago so round and strong; but the limb almost melted, so to speak, in his hand, so utterly had it fallen away; the poor flesh hung flabby and loose upon the young bones.

Compassion, pity, regret, clutched with such violence at Klaus's heart that he almost lost his senses. The madness with which he had lately been contending seemed to vanish altogether from his system. At this moment, all the anguish he had for some time been laboring under appeared no more than the workings of an over-excited fancy or imagination—nay, it wore the appearance of something beyond measure ugly and repulsive, and without any such seriousness of significance as he had thought.

It had vanished from him as with a flash, and, as it seemed to him, forever and entirely; so completely, indeed, that no effort of his would be able to find a single trace of it again. *That* was gone, and all he now felt



was only the old, warm, protecting, pure tenderness which he felt now spring up in him renewed, and in far greater strength than heretofore.

"Nay, nay, Litzie, my poor little brat!" he whispered, softly. "For God's sake, don't be so silly; come home, my darling!"

He stooped to her and lifted her strongly and firmly from the ground. She had become quite light, and the poor face was much smaller, and, indeed, fallen in, especially about the eyes.

And these she opened slowly, and gazed at him with a fixed look of astonishment, as though it took her long to realize the circumstances. "Is it really you, papa, you—with *me*?" She nestled closely to him, as though tired out, and leaned her head on his shoulder.

"Did you not hear me call you, did you not recognize my step, you used to so well?" asked he, with tender reproach.

She sighed deeply. "I did not believe my ears, nor my heart; how could I. For a moment I said to myself that I was dreaming, and, the next, I thought I was dead and in heaven. I lay there quite rigid and stiff, and could not stir. It was only when I felt your touch that I really came to life again!"

He stroked her cheeks, her hair, fondly, caressingly. "My darling!" he whispered tenderly, "my sweet little brat!"

He had forgotten everything; he had the feeling of one liberated from bondage, of being privileged to draw breath easily once again; the sort of feeling a man might have just out of a strong, dangerous fever, and after the phantasmagoria of horrible delirium, not yet wholly passed away from recollection.



"And it was all nothing but an evil dream, it is all over. You are fond of me once more—you will always be fond of me?" she whispered.

"I have never ceased to be fond of you!" he assured her, "never—it was something quite different; it was quite another kind of trouble that was on me." He shuddered in every limb. "Never ask me anything about it, never!"

"Why, how should I? You've told me not to," said she simply. "But is it all over now?" She gave him an anxious glance.

"Yes, little woman, it is all over!" Poor Klaus! "And now come home, my darling; mamma is expecting us, and she is anxious about you," he said, pressingly.

"Oh, as long as she knows that I'm with you, she can't be anxious," Lizzie solemnly assured him, "she knows well enough that you would not let any harm come to me. Do let us remain a little bit, I entreat you, papa—a little, little bit, only a moment; sit down with me on the steps of the church, here. It is such a long time since we were together, you and I."

He did as she asked him, and seated himself by her side on the smooth gray stone steps, which projected far into the churchyard, and which were flanked on either side by a rosebush, one bearing white, the other red roses, both in full bloom.

She sat by his side in complete silence, nestling closely in his warm arm, with her head on his shoulder, lapped in a wonderful, tired, almost sleepy feeling of being wrapped away from all the ills of life and translated to a sort of paradise.

At last she said: "Do you remember—five years ago,



it was—I was so very, very ill? And there came one night when I could neither sit up nor lie down; I was afraid to die and it hurt me to live; oh, how it hurt me to go on living! And then you came and placed yourself on the bed and lifted me up and took me in your arms; and it seemed to me as if the worst of the illness slowly, slowly left me. I fell soundly asleep. And when I woke up I was all but quite well. And so it is now—just the same!”

“My darling!” he whispered, and stroked her cheeks, then he kissed her. He was no longer afraid of himself, all that was over forever!

Then, suddenly, quite suddenly, while he was pressing his lips upon her closed eyes, his breath almost stopped; he turned giddy. He took his arm from her, rose to his feet. “Come home!” he cried, “come!”

His voice was changed; he was as pale as death once again—and terror, boundless terror and horror, were in his eyes.

She saw it directly. And again she threw her arms round him, as if to fling herself between him and all this world’s woe and hurt, as she had done on that evening when, for the first time, she had asked him about the cause of his affliction, and entreated him to let her share it with him.

But, this time, he did not thrust her away from him—he had not the needful self-restraint. No! And before he could think of what he was about, he clasped her closer and closer to him and kissed her with such violence as nearly to take away her breath.

This time it was she who drew back from him. She pushed him away with a little cry.

“Papa, papa, you hurt me!” she exclaimed.



He came to himself directly. He trembled in every limb, and his countenance betrayed such unspeakable anguish of soul that Lizzie forgot everything else directly.

"Oh, you poor, poor dear!" she cried. "No, no, you must not look so sadly, you must not! I'd rather kill myself than that! Oh, papa, papa!" and she nestled closely to him again.

The moon had risen over the high roof of the school-house, which bounded the churchyard on the east. It shone full on the churchyard, on the flowers, and the crosses and the graves. The imperfect light till then spread over everything now divided itself into spaces of higher light and deep shade.

At the door of the churchyard and standing beside a high lilac bush, Klaus espied a female form in a dark dress. The moonlight fell full on her gray hair. It was Nina! She might have been standing there for some time.

"Do you remember your reading me this winter that beautiful legend of poor Henry, that one where the young girl makes them cut the heart out of her bosom that he may get well again? If I could free you so from your grief and trouble, I'd do it gladly, oh, so gladly!" she almost whispered.

Lizzie had not observed her mother—her compassionate eyes were fastened on Klaus with the expression almost of one passing away in death.

"There is no death that I would not willingly die for you!" she said, in the same low tones.

And he knew well that she spoke the simple truth. He remained quite silent for a few moments, quite overcome. And, then, looking deeply into her eyes, he mur-



mured: "If one of the two had to die for the other it should be not you, but I." He drew a deep breath, and then, in a quite different voice, his usual everyday voice, added: "And now come home. Mamma is there, see; she has come to fetch us!"

They went; and they were all quite still and quiet, all three of them.

They were in the hall, and at the foot of the staircase, and he was about to take leave of her for the night, when she said:

"Oh, papa, I am so terribly tired to-night! When I was so ill five years ago, you used to carry me downstairs every morning, and upstairs every evening again. And every time I used to feel as if an angel were carrying me to Paradise. Do carry me upstairs once more, as if I were a little child again! I am scarcely heavier than I was then."

He did so. He carried her, firmly and with sure steps, up the stairs. He set her down before the door of her chamber.

Then, in her old childlike way, she placed her hands on his shoulders and leaned her head back to be kissed good-night.

He kissed her with all, and only all, the pure fervor of the kisses he had given her as a child; and, then, he kissed her hand; which he had never before done.

"God protect you!" he said. "Never again forget, Lizzie, that you have always been the greatest joy of my life, always the creature whom I have loved better than anything in the whole world. Never forget it again for a moment!" He looked at her once again, and then turned quickly and went down the stairs. She stood



gazing at him on the threshold of her chamber until he disappeared at the bend of the staircase.

He did not turn round to look again.

---

NINA was standing at the foot of the stairs expecting him. "Go upstairs," said he, without looking at her; "go upstairs and put her to bed."

She went up without a word in reply. A quarter of an hour later she came down again. She found him waiting for her in the dining-room. He was seated at the large dining-table under the hanging lamp, which was smoking. Nina turned it higher. He looked up and their eyes met. He knew that she had divined his secret and that it was not possible to put off longer a discussion of the matter and the coming to a clear understanding with each other. The only question he put to himself was what form that discussion and its issue would take, and how Nina would view the misfortune that had befallen him. Not, indeed, that his situation could be changed any way, for better or worse; but he could not help fearing something harsh, something that would cut deeply into his flesh, just as a dying person might fear shrill and piercing sounds, making his struggle with death worse for him.

But no! At this moment Nina's bearing and conduct were exemplary and noble, indeed. She did not think of herself a single moment, only of him. With the lamp still in her hand she gazed a while upon his features, now sharpened and rigid with deep suffering; and she



read in them what showed her that he had gone through all the tortures of such a struggle as only a truly noble man could have undergone.

Then she went up to him, laid her hand on his head, and said, very sadly: "My poor, unhappy Klaus!" That was all.

As we told, earlier, the long, uninterrupted intercourse with him had developed everything of good and noble that she had in her. Besides, she had never loved him as a woman can love a man, in spite of the warm sentiments of affectionate reverence and gratitude his conduct had inspired her with. It stood her, therefore, now in good stead that she never had been actuated by mere jealousy or distrust, and could not be, even at this juncture.

All that she felt was compassion, pure, unselfish compassion for him. He saw it, and almost cowered under the burden of her excessive goodness, as though he felt unworthy of it. And yet he knew that if ever man was innocent, whose soul had been tortured day and night by an unhallowed yearning, he was that man.

She let her hand fall slowly from his head to his shoulder; he took it in his and drew it to his lips.

"My brave, good wife," he murmured, "God bless you!"

"God's blessing glances off from me and those I love, it would seem," she said, in a dull, heavy voice; "and who can help us, if He does not?"

His hands were stretched out before him upon the dark oak table; he clinched his fists and then opened them.

"We must ourselves find a way of help."

"But how?" She seated herself at the angle of the



square table, and so that she could observe his face closely as they talked. He did not answer her question.

Later she told herself that he must already have made up his mind during that short silence. But, at that moment, she had no foreboding.

"Nay, something must be done," she murmured, almost inaudibly; "we cannot go on living like this."

"Yes," he repeated, in a still duller tone, "something must be done."

"I will go with the little one away to Austria."

"She will refuse to go without me!" he replied, and shook his head in an inconsolable way.

"If that *is* so—if"—Nina passed her hands through her gray hair—"I shall have to open her eyes to the facts of our position; yes, even if I have to expose myself entirely to her. I *must* open her eyes!"

"Open her eyes! To what?" he asked quickly.

"To the fact that you are not her father," replied Nina, with a groan.

He gave her a sharp glance. "Never!" he cried, excitedly; and then added, a little more quietly: "Besides, what use would it be?"

"Well, she would, of course, alter her conduct to you, she would be more reserved. That would make things easier for you."

Good, kind, unselfish, Nina certainly had become in her life with him; but of sensitive perception, in the highest meaning of those words, she had gained nothing, nor was she capable of doing so.

"Yes, it would make things easier for me," he said, almost violently, shrugging his shoulders. "But—but she!"



Nina had not thought of that; there followed a long, oppressive pause. The first to speak was Klaus.

"No!" he said, in a low, sternly repressed tone, looking a little wildly about him between his words, as though he were afraid the child might hear him. "No; Litzie must never know that I am not what she takes me for. It would be her death. I know her better than you. Perhaps we were wrong to bring her up under that illusion; but, now that it has gone so far, we must keep it up to the end. Promise me, Nina, promise sacredly that you will never impart what we have always kept hidden from her!"

He held his hand out to her. She placed hers in his.

"I promise it you if it is your wish. But, if that is to be so, I can see no issue, none. Under the circumstances, as they stand now, you cannot endure the tortures you undergo indefinitely; sooner or later you will go crazy over them, and then—" She shuddered.

He gave her a terrible look. "And you fancy that I would ever let it come to that?" he asked.

She did not grasp at all the meaning that lay behind his words; but what she did see was, that there was a depth and tenderness in his nature which, after all, she had never yet fathomed—which, indeed, she lacked length of time to fathom. She cast down her eyes in a sort of shame. Suddenly she began to sob:

"My mother was right!" she cried. "I ought never to have married. She always said that misery would come of it."

"Don't be foolish, Nina," he replied, gently; "no blame for anything rightly falls on you, none whatever. Nay, you have been a good, faithful wife to me for fifteen long years. I can feel nothing but gratitude to you



for your indefatigable care and kindness. Nobody could possibly see that what has befallen would befall. It is I who am the only one blamable, that is only too sadly and dreadfully certain; and it is incumbent on me, therefore, to set things aright as far as may be. But we must make it our chief concern to see that the child suffers as little as possible; protect her from all and every kind of suffering in this matter I fear we cannot. Poor, sweet little rogue!" He clinched his fist again, opened it, and then drew a long, deep sigh.

"I am tired," he said, and rose. She followed his example. What more could either of them say?

---

HOURS followed hours, and Nina that night could not close her eyes. The moon shone into her room; silvery gray, its light shimmered through the unfastened curtains. She was tortured by a horrible unrest. She arose once and opened the door of her husband's room, which immediately adjoined hers, and looked in. He lay stretched at full length on the bed, with his right arm over his eyes like a man afraid of the light.

The room was filled with the clear, sharp moonlight. She saw his face quite plainly, all of it not hidden by his arm. How handsome and young he still was, she said to herself, and what might not life still have had in store for him, if the circumstances had only been different.

She felt a dreadful tightness at her heart. She observed that he had not let down the roller-blinds, and went to one of the windows to do it for him.



Then he took his arm from his eyes and said: "Let be, Nina; I don't want to shut out the light."

"But—perhaps you would get to sleep quicker if there were not so much light," said Nina.

"I don't think so," he answered; "besides—" He stopped short.

She stepped from the window and went up to his bed. She stood by his side for a few moments; she did not venture to touch him, but only smoothed his pillow gently, and then withdrew, sighing, into her own chamber.

That word "besides," uttered in that tired voice, that single word, the one fragment of an unuttered sentence and which seemed to cut off peremptorily all effort to give him any sort of ease, that word sounded with a long, long, lingering echo in her soul. It was the last word she was destined ever to hear from his lips.

She fell asleep when morning was not far off. She fancied, before this, that she heard steps below in the hall and at the front door of the house; but she was then neither fully awake nor asleep; it might be only a dream, and she slept on. When she rose, the next day, Klaus was already gone. He had left a message with the servants that he was going for a sail, and he was not to be expected back to dinner.

In these latter days he had gone out nearly every day with his boat, there was nothing remarkable in that; nevertheless, a chill feeling of dread took possession of Nina, and, for a moment, almost convulsed her with its anguish.

Lizzie got up quite late in the day. She had slept very well; her step was lighter, her eyes clearer, than they had been for a long time when she came down into the



dining-room where Nina was waiting breakfast for her. She had a couple of white roses in her bosom.

"Been in the garden already, little woman?" asked Nina, on whose heart lay an intolerably heavy weight.

"No," answered the little one, with a happy smile. "Papa hung these roses here on the handle of my door before he went out."

"How do you know that it was papa?"

"Because he fastened the flowers with the neckerchief which he wore yesterday," said Litzie. "It is so sweet of him to have thought of me," added she, looking down tenderly on the roses. "He didn't wish to wake me, and yet he wanted to leave me some sign of affection before going out for his sail. It was from Meta I heard that he had gone out on the water. But what is the matter with you, mamma? Why, you are as pale as death!" cried the child, spring forward in great anxiety. For a moment it looked to her as though Nina were going to fall from her chair.

But Nina recovered her self-possession directly. "It is nothing," said she, "a touch of giddiness—it is over now," and she poured out Litzie's tea.

When breakfast was over it occurred to her to ask the people whether Klaus had taken his sailor with him. No! From that moment she gave way to despair. Under pretext of a headache she shut herself up in her room. Litzie came every now and then to see her; the girl was full of sympathy and much troubled about her mother.

"Oh, I hope you will be well enough to take tea with us when papa comes back, won't you?" she asked.

"Yes, yes; little woman."

"If the wind is not against him, he should be home by



six," chatted on Lizzie; "I shall tell them to set the tea things in the garden."

"Yes, yes, dear child, but leave me now."

"Poor mamma!" Lizzie kissed her hand and tripped off as lightly as a bird.

The day was exceedingly warm; about three o'clock a strong wind came up and then a storm broke. About five it had cleared up, and the sun shone brightly again. The sunlight was brilliant on the damp leaves. The shower had beaten down only a very few of the larger flowers, and everything seemed the more beautiful after the brief storm.

Nina remained alone in her room, with her hands folded in her lap. Her heart grew heavier and heavier every hour. It seemed to her as if it was actually growing larger and larger in her bosom. The soft perfume of the summer, freshened and sharpened by the shower, came up to her through the open windows, and she heard the child humming gayly; the young creature was joyous and happy now, as she had not been for many days.

Lizzie made all sorts of little affectionate preparations for papa. She helped Meta to set the table for him, and decked it with roses; she plucked a big dish of strawberries in the garden, and ordered some whipped cream; she procured some fresh black bread, such as they usually eat in farmhouses, knowing that he was fond of it; he would surely have a good appetite to-day when he returned from the sea.

When it was near six in the evening she ran down to the beach to the spot where he would be sure to put in.

Nina heard her hurrying off. The unhappy woman's hands were cold and her temples were bathed in sweat; she drew back her hair, which was streaming over her



forehead, and she felt for a moment so overwhelmed with despair that she would fain have flung herself through the window.

Another hour passed, and he was still absent. From the moment of her waking that day she had been telling herself that she was quite without hope; but for all that a storm of feeling was raging within her which was fed in some measure by some hope which lay beyond her consciousness. She listened and listened; she placed her hand upon her heart, which was beating violently and so audibly that it prevented her hearing what there might, peradventure, be to hear; but there was nothing, nothing.

Yet another hour passed. She could not endure being alone any longer in her room, and went down to join Lizzie on the beach. What would she not have given if the two could have come to meet her, Lizzie hanging joyously on his arm and prattling as of yore! And yet—yet . . . She went down. There was Lizzie, standing on the stairs which led down from the plateau above to the beach. She was pale as death; she was shading her eyes with her hand and gazing with all her might into the far distance.

“I cannot conceive how it is papa remains away so long,” she murmured, as she heard Nina coming; “the others are all at home already—the people who went out this morning the same time that he did. He must have been driven in some other direction, he must have landed somewhere else.”

“Yes, Lizzie, I think so, too,” said Nina, in a dull voice; “he must have landed at another point of the coast, otherwise he would have been at home long ago.” Her voice trembled.



"Mother, you are alarmed!" cried Lizzie, excitedly, almost angrily. She would not allow herself to think that there was any cause for alarm.

"Alarmed — alarmed!" murmured Nina, collecting herself with difficulty. "Any one who has suffered as I have done cannot help all sorts of fancies, possible and impossible, coming up in her head; but it is certainly strange that he is not here all this time."

"Strange — strange!" ejaculated Lizzie, "why, such things are constantly happening! He may have got out of his course, during the storm. When a storm comes up it is difficult for a person to see to the sails and steer, too, when he is all by himself. But he is so strong and so skillful. It is just simply this: he has landed at another point on the coast, that's certain. Mother, mother dear, don't look so sadly, don't! Nothing can have happened to him. The little bit of a storm is really not worth talking about; yes, he has landed somewhere else! But as he knows how silly we are, and that we get frightened when there's no reason whatever for it, he will be sure to take a carriage and get over to us as soon as he possibly can. And then—then, *shan't* we be delighted to have him back, and won't we laugh and laugh over our silly fright? Yes; for it really is quite irrational to give way to alarm like that. He'll scold us in his dear, tender way. He'll be here in less than half an hour, now; it must be so, I'm sure it must be so—isn't it so, mamma, isn't it so, isn't it so?" A smile wherein there seemed something like a touch of madness quivered about her mouth and eyes as she spoke. Then, all of a sudden, she covered her eyes with her hands and broke out into a wild, convulsive, choking fit of sobbing.

"Come home, come," said Nina, quite overcome;



“come, or we shall be too late for him. You are quite right, he must be coming home by land.”

---

THAT night Lizzie did not go to bed at all. She stood at her window till the twilight was displaced by the moonlight, and was there still when the moonshine gave way to the mighty light of the sun.

And she kept looking, looking intently along the road by which he must come, must surely come!

---

AND at last he did come—two days later—and he came by land, as Lizzie had expected. He came in a heavy farm wagon!

Yes; he had lost his bearings—and had landed on another part of the coast, indeed; on quite another coast.

---

THEY laid him on his bed; they folded his hands over his breast, lighted two wax candles at the head of his couch, with a crucifix between them!

Lizzie was not in the house when they brought him; she was in the village. Old seafaring people, who suf-



ferred with her in that mortal anguish of her soul, had been telling her in this interval all sorts of stories about skippers who had been away for a week, fourteen days, and had then come home as healthy and jolly as anybody need wish to be. It all depended upon the question whether you had lost your bearings or not; if you did there was no knowing where you'd be driven.

She went from one of them to another, to have these stories told to her, and tried to lull her desperate anxiety in listening to all sorts of legends of the sea.

When she reached home Nina met her in the hall. Her mother's eyes were fixed in that hard, stony glare the stillness of which is produced only by the death of all hope and the stoppage of the movement which goes with hope.

"Papa is come?" asked Lizzie, sharply.

"Oh, little woman!" Nina tried to take the child in her arms and prepare her. There was no room for it—Lizzie had at once divined the truth—she had seen it with a flash. She put Nina away from her and without another word went up to Klaus Olden's chamber. "Papa!" she shrieked; and then there was dead silence. She went up to the bed where he lay. Yes, it was he! It was his corpse; it had been cast up at a village miles away from Elmstadt. One of his former pupils had recognized him. The daylight had been shut out of the room as far as possible; the red flame of the wax candles was flickering by his bed. But, uncertain as was the light, she saw him quite clearly, features and all. He was not much disfigured; the body was only slightly swollen, and the face, in consequence, pale with more than the usual pallor of death.

And that beautiful face wore an expression of fatigue



which it had never known in life; but it had lost nothing of that stamp and expression of exquisite kindness and goodness which had been his chief characteristic while he was still on earth.

With trembling hands Lizzie pushed aside the small table with the wax candles and the crucifix, and kneeling down by the bed, laid her head by his on the pillow so that her cheek touched his. The coldness of death pierced her to the very marrow; but she did not stir; she remained in that position, beside him, quite motionless.

Nina had not gone in with her, but remained at the door. She did not venture to disturb those two unhappy ones in this their last interview on earth. Her knees gave way with her and she sank cowering to the ground at the threshold. Her thoughts recurred to that terrible night at St. Eusébe, when she had once before knelt at a threshold which she did not dare to pass, while her child was struggling with death on the other side of the door. At that time she was not permitted to go to her child's assistance at all; she had been thrust aside like a mere stranger; and now . . . !

And the truth was, the sad, sad truth, as she saw it now, that in her child's heart she had always been a stranger, always !

She waited and waited for long hours. At last she opened the door. There, kneeling by the bed, with her cheek touching the dead man's cheek, was Lizzie, sunk in deep sleep. It was her first sleep since the moment that Klaus had left the house.

There was no help for it; she *must* be roused out of that sleep; and none but Nina might do it!

---



How the catastrophe came about no one could exactly make out. Everybody told, again and again, how often they had warned the gentleman against putting out to sea all by himself. As to the true state of the case, of that nobody had even the slightest suspicion. It was only Nina who knew why and how it was that he had returned alive no more to his home, and that this had happened, beyond doubt, of his set purpose.

They did not keep the poor corpse long. Old, experienced seafaring people declared that it was wrong to do so, however beautiful and unaltered a corpse might look in those first hours; the flesh might all of a sudden fall away from the bones. That did happen, sometimes, with drowned people.

The coffin was made and ready that very night, and next morning they buried him in the same spot where Lizzie had waited for him so late that other sad night—in the grave of his favorite sister.

It was a wonderful June day. A heavy life-giving shower had fallen on the earth a little while before the funeral bell began to toll. But, just at the moment when his pupils—six there were of them—who had carried him out of the house, put down the bier by the open grave, the sky began to clear and to be filled with white and blue clouds.

All the cottages and houses in Elmstadt were emptied, that day, of their dwellers. Every soul of them—and there were many who were barely able to stand—was in the churchyard. And they stood round the open grave with folded hands. The vegetation around them had been refreshed by the rain, and the breeze that played



about them was laden with sweet odors. Only, from the grave there ascended a cold and musty smell; but in the small dark pool of water which had gathered at its bottom there was seen the reflection of the bright blue sky.

Nina had tried to prevent Lizzie from being present at the burial; but Lizzie had made no reply at all to her mother's remonstrances, not one word. And there she stood by the grave, between her mother and the minister, pale and with a fixed countenance; while the bells in the old churchyard swung one way and another as though they would never stop.

Yes; the girl's glance was fixed and her eyes glassy, as though she saw nothing of what was round her—and yet she saw it all only too well—the priest—the weeping people—the black, yawning grave, with the reflection of the sky in its depths, and there, upon the heap of earth, the small, child's coffin in which they had collected and buried his sister's bones, and on the bier beside it the large, long coffin.

Everybody there was weeping, she only wept not; but such sadness as was on her face no one there had ever yet seen or did ever see—pale, rigid, helpless, with grief in every limb and fiber, there she stood in an old black dress of her mother's which had been hastily altered over night to fit her, there being no time to procure regular mourning. She seemed all but dead to what was going on, and had to have pointed out to her whatever it was necessary for her to follow. All eyes were fastened upon her. And the people nearly forgot their own sorrow for the dead in their compassion for his surviving child. They could not help drawing each other's attention to her. His little daughter! His little daughter!



The minister got through the service as quickly as he possibly could on her account. He delivered a short and very beautiful discourse in which he laid special stress on the noble qualities of the dead man. Then, there was one more "Our Father," and then—then it came—the moment when the heavy coffin was lowered into the grave on the thick cord, which made a frightfully strident noise as it went down. Lizzie bent over it, gazing intently with parted lips; she stretched out her trembling arms to it as it descended.

It was over, the coffin was below. The priest came close to her and told her to strew the first handful of earth upon the coffin. She did not at first understand him; and then she stooped with difficulty—she took a quite small handful of earth—bent forward—and then, with her mouth still shut, she uttered a weak, pitiful cry, tottered and fell! The priest caught her in his arms, otherwise she would have fallen into the grave.

---



THE crowd dispersed, and the sun now shone out in all its fullness. The raindrops were still hanging on all the leaves and bushes, and the strong rays, falling on the wet vegetation, were broken up into fragments of light. It seemed as though all earth were shedding tears for him; but also that, through these tears, there pierced something of the light and joy belonging to regions beyond this earth.

And it was so with the human beings there. They began to tell one another about him who had left them; what a noble creature he was; how much good, how many kind things he had done to them, for them!

Only one young creature was there for whom, at that moment, there was no light at all, in whom all, all was dark—Lizzie.

They had had to carry her home, still quite unconscious, from the churchyard.

---

AT first they feared for her life—and then they were afraid that her reason was irrevocably shattered. She lay two, three weeks in her bed, all strength gone, without taking notice of anything or anybody. She did not shed a tear, and she refused all food. Nina exhausted herself in caresses and words of the utmost tenderness, but her remonstrances were quite without effect. The girl lay there all the time quite white, quite still, and



seemed not to take into account the difference between day or night.

The first person who succeeded in bringing a little light into her eyes was the priest. He entreated Nina's permission to come and see the girl. And, after his first visit, he came every day.

He had been a close friend of the dead man. At first he spoke to the young creature about him and scarcely at all of anything else. His first step was thus, by giving to her grief the aid of the words which she had not the power to bring to her own lips, to induce in her, with gradual tenderness, a frame of mind in which she might be capable of receiving the consolations of faith; those consolations which begin when human wisdom has come to the end of its tether.

At first she lay there, while he was speaking, in an apathy and remoteness of feeling almost as complete as she had shown when Nina had plied her with consolations and entreaties to take food. But, after a while, she listened, at first with interest, and presently with avidity. He spoke of a resurrection from the grave, of a life in the hereafter. And, indeed, if she was not to derive support from such truths as those, were, under heaven, was she to find it now?

She had always, of course, like other children properly trained in religion, believed in the immortality of the soul. And her belief now very speedily became something much more than a dogma. It took decided shape and clear outlines, developed to something like what people call hallucination. Be that so or not, this fixing of the idea or belief of immortality which now went on in her mind, helped materially to strengthen her and put her on the road to something like recovery.



And was all this really no more than illusion? Or was the truth this, that her organs of perception had been rendered so subtle and acute by pain that she had attained a power of presentiment and forecast beyond what is possible to robust, everyday strength?

Which of us can say anything decisive upon such a point as this? Providence has quite evidently not purposed that the veil which hides the great secret should be lifted by human hands; for, were this great mystery and enigma to be once definitively solved, that doubt and restlessness, which are the great spur of humanity in the paths of progress and development, would disappear from the world.

The day came when Lizzie got out of her bed, though no one had at that moment advised or suggested it. And when she, at last, went out of doors, her first little walk was to the grave in the churchyard. While she was still so weak that she could scarcely lift her head from the pillow she had implored the priest not to allow the smooth, heavy gravestone to be laid upon the grave again. She had a sort of feeling that it might lie too heavily on him who slept there. The priest had promised compliance with this strange, sad desire of hers. And now she went to visit that grave, and crouched down beside the bare mound of earth, and nestled close to it and leaned her head against it as though it were a living human creature, and passed her thin, wasted hands over it, and murmured all sorts of tender little words to this cold, unanswering earth.

Nina had slipped out after her. She stood still at the little white gate of the churchyard, and gazed for a long time at her child. At last she called tenderly to Lizzie and told her to come home.



Litzie lifted her little head with difficulty and began to sob with sudden violence. It was the first time since she had acquired the certain knowledge of Klaus Olden's fate that she had been able to shed tears.

From that day a remarkable improvement in her health set in. She soon got up as regularly as the others, came to table at meal times, and showed herself, every now and then, particular as to her food; and her indifference to what she ate soon quite disappeared.

Her whole thought turned exclusively upon the dead man. She spent her time all but wholly in the churchyard, and her principal occupation was to decorate the grave and tend the flowers which she planted there.

If the weather was so bad that she was obliged to stay indoors she generally stayed all the time in Klaus's chamber; she handled all the objects in it with as much tenderness as if they had been living creatures; she read again the books which they had read together and frequently pressed a kiss upon passages that he had marked. The sharp pangs of her anguish began to subside, and in their place came a gentle melancholy; the tortures of longing for the vanished presence slowly transformed themselves into the tranquillity that goes with the mere dreams of things that cannot be.

At first Nina's despair was so great that she could quite enter into and share that of her child. But, little by little, she forgot her grief for the departed in anxiety for the creature that was left to her. And, as week followed week and Litzie's whole life, in feeling and thought, seemed to be given exclusively to a grave and a memory, something like jealousy sprang up in the mother's heart, and she began almost to grudge the dead this enthusiastic and absorbing love of her child. After



all, Lizzie was her child, and he was a stranger to her blood.

But, through all this, she waited on her girl, tended her, caressed her, spoiled her, from morning to night. And Lizzie was fully sensible of her kindness, was grateful to her for it, and repaid her mother with loving attentions. But never, never, did she come to nestle against her mother's shoulder with the same tired tenderness with which she clung to that hillock of the dead, after sunset, in the gray twilight time when neither light nor shadow was there and the perfume of the roses was at its strongest. That was the hour when it had been his wont to go and seek her and bring her home with him.

But Nina's heart suffered keen pangs, not unmingled with bitterness, when she went to the gate of the churchyard and watched from that spot her child's proceedings. And, not infrequently, she had to put some constraint on herself not to call out to the girl with some sharp words of jealous remonstrance. Her poor, pale, still so weak Lizzie! Whom any hard unsparing words might as easily have felled to the ground as a bludgeon!

She conquered herself every time when this inclination seized her; but she became almost crazy with the effort. And the consequence was that in her feeling and dealing with the child there ensued a failure, in some degree, of that soft and gentle tenderness which was so necessary to the poor girl, and thus her daughter, instead of coming nearer and nearer to her, as she so longed, became gradually estranged rather from her.

Nina took counsel with the priest and the physician about the matter, complaining bitterly of this absorption of the girl in "crazy fancies" which extinguished in her all interest in the actualities and realities of life.



But physician and clergyman were both of one mind; and that was that no attempt should be made to bring about any alteration in the present state of things. If the poor young stricken soul were beginning to weave visions, these were a consolation which should be carefully left alone; it was too much to expect that the girl, with her temperament and character, could or would, for the present, be satisfied now with the dreadful dry realities of the world and her bereavement; these might be fatal to her if she grasped them fully.

Nina was, therefore, obliged to let things take their own course. But the bitterness in her heart did not subside; on the contrary it grew greater and greater; until the jealousy within her out-topped her love.

Was she always to hold no more than the second place in her child's heart?

---

MEANTIME, letters had arrived from Austria, filled with warmest sympathy, from all her nearest relatives, sister and both brothers. The last to reach her was one from her mother.

When this anxiously expected letter did come it was stained with tears, its writing showed that the hand had trembled; and its terms showed that the writer's mind had been not a little perplexed. The old woman spoke of the dead man with a strange mixture of grief and enthusiasm, and her sympathy with her daughter was deep and sincere. Nevertheless, there was something in it



forced and unnatural; the words "God help you" occurred a little too frequently, and several passages in the letter were struck out. The letter ended with a postscript in which the old woman begged her daughter, particularly, to acquaint her precisely and fully with all the details connected with the death of her dear son-in-law.

Nina could not but feel that her mother had seen, more or less deeply, into the real state of the case, that, at the least, she suspected that Klaus's death was not involuntary; but she felt perfect assurance that the baroness would never allow a single word to pass her lips to anybody about her conjectures.

This letter was followed by others still warmer in their tenor and even more sympathetic, in which the mother and all her children begged Nina, in the most pressing terms, to come to Austria with her young daughter. They urged upon her that both of them would much more quickly get over the worst of their grief in Nina's old home: Nina because it was her home, and Litzie under the influence of the new surroundings.

Nina's craving for her mother's roof and her family became so great after this that there was hardly room for any other feeling, and it was all the stronger because of her passionate desire to get Litzie away from the grave which so absorbed the girl's every faculty.

When Nina broached the plan of the journey to her for the first time, the child began to tremble so violently and then sob so convulsively that Nina's heart was torn.

Her jealous feeling disappeared wholly, for the moment, in compassionate tenderness. She took the young creature on her lap. Alas! how light, how painfully light was the young frame not long since so plump and



full, so overflowing with youthful vigor. Nina kissed her, stroked her face, and for a little while behaved with all that softness and tenderness which had made the dead man so irresistible. And for the first time she felt round her neck the lean arms, and the small cheek resting on her shoulder, with all the self-forgetting, appealing, childish tenderness which had been so long and so vainly craved for.

This one moment was the most happy and blessed of her whole life. And it was to stand alone. Once only, that once, was she thus to know the fullness of maternal joy.

From that hour the mother's whole being became possessed exclusively by the craving for predominance in her child's affections. She had felt at last how great was the measure of tenderness in the young creature's soul; and she could not now forego it; nay, desired it altogether for herself.

She asked the physician whether he thought the journey to Austria advisable for Litzie. His view was that it depended upon circumstances. If the girl could be induced to consent to it without any injurious pressure, he thought that so complete a change of air and scene would be beneficial. But, in her present sensitive condition, any sort of constraint would have to be carefully avoided, or the consequences might be serious indeed.

From that moment Nina set in motion all her resources of persuasion, direct and indirect, to bring Litzie to consent to the expedition; and these resources were by no means inconsiderable at a pinch. Nina was not without her skill, not always the most straightforward, either, in getting her own way. And she showed her "tact," such as it was, in the pursuit of her purpose, by appealing to Litzie's sense of obedience to the wishes of the



dead man, the memory of whom she, all the time, longed to expel from her child's heart.

"It was only for a few weeks she wanted Lizzie to leave Elmstadt," she coaxed, "only to get up a little of her poor strength. There was nothing papa would have wished more. It was very small and foolish to imagine that the dead could not be just as near to us anywhere as at the spot where they were buried. The soul was not so bound, but could hover about us, be with us, everywhere," and so forth.

She so urged and urged the child that, at last, she extorted Lizzie's consent. And the journey to Austria was fixed for the end of August.

---

THE hour of departure was nearly at hand. Nina had still some preparations to make, and meditated a shopping expedition to Hamburg. But the idea of leaving Lizzie by herself for a whole day made her terribly nervous, and she felt she could not do it. She would have begged the priest to keep his eye on the girl, but, at this juncture he happened to be from home and was not to return for some little time. She finally determined to take Lizzie with her.

The evening before this projected excursion Lizzie stayed beside the beloved grave somewhat longer than usual. The night which followed was close and sultry. Lizzie slept now in her mother's room. Suddenly, some



time about midnight, Nina was awakened by a slight rustling noise. She sat up and saw that Lizzie had got out of bed and was standing by the window which looked upon the churchyard across the road. The girl had drawn the blind partially aside and was looking fixedly.

"Lizzie! what is the matter with you? what are you doing there!" asked Nina, alarmed. She sprang out of bed and flung her arms round the girl's wasted form.

"Did you not hear anything, mamma?" asked Lizzie, in a bewildered sort of way.

"No; what should I hear?"

"Papa called me!" said Lizzie, with solemnity; and her large eyes shone in the half darkness as though filled with supernatural light.

"Oh, my child! my child! what fancies are these?" said her mother, anxiously, stroking the girl's hair and trying to soothe her.

"Oh, no!" replied Lizzie, shaking her head. "I heard it quite plainly, quite; it was his voice—'Felicia—Lizzie—little woman!'"

"Come, my darling! Come and lie down!" entreated Nina.

Lizzie sighed deeply and, turning slowly, let her mother lead her back to her little bed. Nina seated herself by the child's bed as though to ward off all inroads of ghostly influence, and took the little cold hands in hers.

"This was the way it happened," said Lizzie, in a low voice. "I had dreamed a frightful dream—I had lost my way and came to a strange churchyard, quite strange, which I had never seen; and there was I wandering about among nothing but coffins and graves which had just been violently disturbed; and, out of the coffins came corpses that stretched their cold, damp hands out



to me. Oh! I was nearly strangled with terror and horror! Then, all of a sudden, I heard papa's voice—'Felicia—Lizzie—little woman!' And all my terror vanished at once; I found myself at home, here, directly, and he was stretching his arms out to me. Oh, mother! mother! how can I describe my feelings when he took me in them and clasped me to his heart, the joy, the rapture? But it was only for a single instant, and then I awoke. Oh, how dreadful it was to wake! It seemed to me as though my heart was going to break again. Then—I heard it again, plainly, quite plainly, and this time it came from the churchyard—'Felicia—Lizzie—little woman!' Then I sprang out of bed and looked out. He was not there, but the moonlight fell clear upon the white cross at the head of his grave, and it seemed to me that I could read the inscription: '*Be not afraid, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name—thou art Mine!*'"

She stopped short; then, after a little while, she withdrew her small, cold hands from her mother's, folded them and said, in a low tone, almost as if in prayer: "Yes, he has called me by name; I am his!"

"Child! child! you have been dreaming!" said her mother, much disturbed.

"Oh, no—oh, no, mamma!" Lizzie shook her head. "He called me. I always used to say to him that if he died before me I should be sure to hear his voice over the chasm that separates us. He called me!" And then she said once again, in scarcely audible tones: "I am his!" And then she slept.

---



WHEN she awoke she felt herself much better than before. All her little things were ready, packed by her mother, who dressed her with the most tender, loving care. Lizzie let her mother do as she pleased, paying scarcely any attention to what went on around her. Her eyes had a strange, unearthly look, and seemed fixed upon something far, far away. At the last moment she evinced a painful repugnance to the journey; she lifted up her hands and entreated to be allowed to remain at home. But, after that episode of the previous night, Nina was less than ever inclined to leave the child by herself.

The unhappy girl had never been disposed to set herself obstinately against her mother's desires, and even had she been, she had no strength now for such a struggle. She gave way in a patient, melancholy manner and drove with her mother to the station. It took them about an hour to reach it, and the road went through meadowland and cornfields. The harvest was ready for the sickle. Nina ordered the carriage to be there at a certain hour to fetch them back; then they entered the train.

It was about eleven in the forenoon when they reached Hamburg. At the station they were assailed by an unpleasant odor of carbolic and phenic acid; nay, more than unpleasant, overpowering, repulsive. All the people seemed unusually depressed. A porter called out to another, "Three hundred and fifty!" Another corrected him: "It's four hundred and fifty by this time!" And he spat, shook himself, and stepped up to the drinking-bar.



Nina paid no attention to this; it did not occur to her at the moment that the matter was of any consequence. For weeks she had not touched a newspaper; she had no idea what they were talking about. A little later, when the words recurred to her, she saw their frightful significance.

To spare Litzie all possible fatigue she took a carriage at once and drove with her to the Elster Pavilion, where she had a cup of warm bouillon served to Litzie. It struck her that her little order occasioned some remark, and also that people seemed not a little surprised to see a stranger. But this was fully accounted for, she thought, by the lateness of the season, all the large cities being nearly empty in these advanced summer months. Then she went with Litzie, on foot, to make a few purchases.

In Elmstadt it had been merely warm; here in Hamburg the heat was oppressive almost to torture, and, to make matters worse, there was that pestiferous stench of carbolic acid and phenic acid. Nina's head began to ache directly, and she asked Litzie with no small anxiety whether she did not feel unwell.

But Litzie shook her head, and walked by her mother's side, very still and pale, and made no complaint.

The town seemed as though its whole population had died out, so solitary was it; Nina, therefore, was all the more struck by the fact of twenty people or so all running with one accord, a little way off, into the middle of the street; she was on the point of entering a shoemaker's shop with Litzie. Two of the shop-girls stood in the doorway reaching out as far as possible to look, pale as death and with every sign of terror on their faces. When Nina asked them what could be the reason for people run-



ning together like that, they made no answer at first; and, when Nina repeated her question, they glanced significantly at each other and said that it couldn't be anything of importance—perhaps a dog had been run over. And then they went back into the shop to serve her.

Lizzie uttered not a word of complaint, but became paler and paler, so Nina took her to the Hotel d'Europe to have some dinner. The hotel was entirely empty. The waiters seemed just as much astonished to see the two ladies as the people in the Elster Pavilion had been.

Quite a long time passed before the simple meal that Nina ordered came up. When they had nearly finished it they asked for something iced, ice-cream, or waterice, for dessert. The waiters stared at one another and whispered to one another.

They were presently left to themselves. Nina's nerves were set on edge by the heat, and her head ached badly. A sense of morbid, nervous irritability came over her and she felt it quite difficult to command herself. Lizzie had thawed a little, poor child, during their repast, but this had no effect in dispelling the ill-humor, or nervous excitement her mother labored under; on the contrary, her disquietude was augmented by the fact that Lizzie spoke all the time of nothing except their lost one. Yes, it was so. Excited by their present surroundings, in which everything brought up so vividly the memory of the dead man, the poor, quiet, pale creature began to speak with something of her former childish freedom, almost, it might be said, to chat. She told Nina all about that brief stay of hers with her papa in Hamburg, of his untiring kindness and anxious care of her, and what he had said when this thing and that took



place. But when she noticed that Nina remained quite dumb through all this, she took her mother by the hand in her sweetest way and said:

"You must not think me ungrateful for what you do for me, because I cannot take my thoughts away from him. Oh, indeed, indeed, I cannot tell you all I feel at your kindness, your great kindness! Never, never for one moment, have you made me feel that I am not your real daughter!"

Then Nina's eyes flashed fire. Her jealous feelings blazed up and such intelligence as she possessed ceased altogether to act.

"And whose child should you be, I should like to know, if not mine?" she exclaimed.

"Well, I know that I am papa's daughter; but, as to who my own real mother was, I don't know anything at all; I never ventured to put a question to him about it, for the subject seemed to give him such pain," said Lizzie. Nina's roughness had hurt her. "But that you are not my own mother I have known for a long time."

"I am your mother!" cried Nina, in extreme exasperation; "it was he who was not your father!"

Hardly had the words escaped her lips when she would have given her life to recall them. She remembered her last conversation with Klaus and the solemn promise she had made him never to allow Lizzie to know the real truth. It was too late!

Lizzie had recoiled as though she had received a blow on the head. Pale enough she had been before that; but now her face was of an ashen hue, nearly tinged with green.

"Not my father?" she said, in a low, hoarse voice;



"not my father! Not *he*! Some one else? But—but—he loved me so dearly, he did, he did; that very last night when he kissed me good-night at my door for the last time, he told me never to forget that I had been the dearest thing in the whole world to him! Not my father?"

Nina came closer to the child. "Don't brood over it, Lizzie; don't let yourself brood over it!" she said, insistently. "It surely does not matter much whether he was your real father or not. You were just as dear to him as if you had been his own child, and it was much his wish that you should never learn that he was not your father."

"Then why did you tell me about it?" asked Lizzie, giving her mother a dark, almost hostile look.

"Oh, dear me! it slipped from me—but it is of no consequence, none at all!"

"Of no consequence!" murmured Lizzie; her eyes became almost fixed, and she sunk into deep thought.

At that moment the waiter came in, and went hastily up to the window close to which the two were seated. He let the blind down. Nina looked up. Something drove quickly by the window—a something black, the outlines of which she had not time to make out, glided rapidly past; and then there was heard in the street the noise of stifled human voices, as though some calamity had just befallen.

"What was that?" asked Nina.

"Oh, nothing!" said the waiter, indifferently; "the sun shone in too strongly."

Nina was too much occupied with Lizzie to press him with any further question.

But, as to what passed within Lizzie's soul in that hour



which followed, never did the mother learn anything. Not one word about it did Lizzie utter; she kept absolute silence.

Nina had yet one more little commission to execute. They went out again, from the comparatively cool dining-room of the hotel, into the oppressive heat, the repulsive atmosphere laden with carbolic odor.

Nina thought she knew her way perfectly, but, all of a sudden, saw that she had lost it. She could not find the shop she was looking for.

Lizzie glided on by her side with those strangely fixed eyes, utterly lost in her reflections; and a frightful thought went through the mother's soul. Could it be possible that the child might put things together and conjecture *what* it was that had driven Klaus to death?

Suddenly Lizzie began to drag her feet.

"Are you very tired?" said Nina, in great anxiety.

"I am quite giddy," said Lizzie, in a dull voice.

"My poor darling—wait, go into some shop, and I'll go and fetch a carriage," said Nina. But she looked round in all directions and could not see any shop; they had strayed into a very quiet street—in fact, right into the middle of the quarter where the picturesque Hogarthian architecture prevailed. All the exteriors there were as clean as possible; they wore a look of kindly invitation about them, were quite charming. There was a cool-looking entry or hall close by which opened on to the street.

"Here, sit down here on the step a moment," said Nina; "I'll come directly with the carriage to fetch you. There, sit down on my shawl." She spread the black shawl for the girl to sit on, kissed her, and hastened away.

It took sadly long for her to find a carriage—it



seemed, almost, as though not a vehicle of any kind were to be found in Hamburg. She stopped for a few moments to buy a pineapple for Lizzie; it was her favorite fruit.

At last she found a carriage-stand. The first man she went up to, when she mentioned the street, the name of which she had as carefully as possible impressed upon her recollection, flatly refused to drive her there, declaring that he was engaged. At last she did find one who drove her where she ordered.

"That is the house!" she cried.

He stopped; she sprang out.

"Lizzie!"

Lizzie was gone.

She became rigid with apprehension. She said to herself that she must have mistaken the street. No, there in the hallway was the black shawl. Lizzie was gone!

A terrible dread seized her heart, clutched at her throat. Then she tried to think of some explanation. It was too clear, Lizzie had been unable to understand her long delay—she had gone after her—tried to find her—failed. But where was the child, where?

Lizzie had money with her. Once before when they were in Hamburg she had lost her way for a few moments in the street; and then Nina had said to her: "If the worst comes to the worst, take a carriage and drive to the hotel. It is not very probable that we should miss one another, but still such a thing might happen."

"She won't have driven to the hotel, but she may probably to the station," Nina said to herself. She waited a few moments and then screamed, "Lizzie! Lizzie!"

In one of the windows, between a row of withered



flower stalks which somebody had quite forgotten to keep alive with water, was a parrot in his cage swinging himself like a mad thing in his ring and screeching uncannily. At another window two or three pale faces were pressing themselves against the panes. There was no answer to her cry; she began to feel that her senses were going.

She drove to the station. Lizzie was not there. She saw the porter who had attended to them that morning. "Had he not seen her daughter?" she implored him—"a young girl in mourning with a black sailor's hat."

He said, "Yes—he thought yes—she had gone by the last train—yes—yes, he remembered—to X-burg." That was the station for Elmstadt.

Nina clung convulsively to this straw of hope. Yes, for some reason or other, Lizzie must have made up her mind to go on without her. She waited as best she might for the next train.

Such a crowd as presently packed itself together at that station, she had never seen in all her life—compared with it the Sunday excursionists in Paris were a mere handful. It seemed as if all Hamburg were leaving the place. She heard nothing, saw nothing, save a confused mob of human beings, among whom she could see no Lizzie!

At last she was able to find a seat in her train. After another hour and a half of torture she arrived at her destination. Here again at the station she inquired for Lizzie. Here, too, people seemed to remember seeing a young girl in black with a sailor's hat. She had arrived by the five o'clock train and driven with the doctor's wife to Elmstadt. They knew the doctor's wife quite well.



Nina breathed a little more freely. That must be Litzie; the girl must have lost her head somehow, and fled home.

How that could have happened she could not, indeed, imagine or explain; but, improbable as it was, that was the only explanation of the matter at all likely to be true. She had ordered the carriage for a later hour. And it was only after a long search that she was able to engage a vehicle to take her to Elmstadt. And by this time she had quite persuaded herself that she should find Litzie at home.

When her anguish and alarm were at their highest, a sort of anger took hold of her because of this cruel alarm the child had caused her; if she found her all right at home, then she would, yes she would, give the little one a severer scolding than she had ever had. Oh, no, no, no! She would go on her knees before the child, kiss her hands and feet, and thank God!

Everything around her was quite still, and the heat was great. And amid the stillness she could discern the cutting swish of the scythes as they mowed down the grain, and its dull sound as it fell, as if helpless in its ripeness, to the ground.

Nina's heart almost stopped beating. There was something which all this suddenly brought back to her recollection. What was it, what?

It brought back her memory of that hot August day at S. Eusébe, her anguish about her sick child; and, then, it brought back something else, something frightful, something that had preceded that illness. What was it? what?

Then, it came back to her, came up in her mind as



some ghost might from a dark and dreadful grave, as a messenger of woe. It was that frightful wish which had forced itself into her soul, that frightful cry which had forced itself from her heart in Paris, so often—before she received the letter which informed her of her child's illness.

"I wish it would die; I wish it would but die!"

The carriage stopped. She got out; stepped into the house. There was no one in the hall!

"Meta!" she screamed.

"Oh, thank God, madame! at last!" cried Meta, from the garden, running up.

"Is Lizzie come home?"

"No, madame."

"But she *must* have come; by the five o'clock train—with the doctor's wife!"

"No; the doctor's wife did come then, but it was her niece she brought with her, who lost her father and mother two days ago with the cholera."

"The cholera!" Nina staggered.

"Yes, has not madame heard about it? Three hundred and fifty people died of it in Hamburg yesterday. And by noon to-day there will have been more than four hundred more. The doctor's wife brought the news—we read all about it, cook and I, to-day. But the newspapers don't give any idea of the horrors really going on. In the poorer streets people are throwing the corpses out of the windows into the street; they shove them out, anyhow, from the halls of the houses. The carts are driving through the streets night and day, picking up the sick and the dead wherever they find them. More than a thousand corpses are above ground, unburied.



But, for God's sake! madame, where is mademoiselle?"

The only answer Nina gave was an awful scream, such as a woman might utter under the hand of an assassin. She fell back, striking the wall heavily.

Then she tried to hasten upstairs, and could not. Gasping for breath between every word, she cried:

"Meta, fetch the package of Litzie's photographs—the one on my writing-table—quick, quick; fly!"

Meta flew upstairs; Nina stood there as if struck to stone. A sweet perfume came to her from the garden. Half mechanically she forced herself forward a few steps. Yes, there was the garden, spread out in all its peaceful loveliness; the August heats had but very slightly burned its rich foliage. And, in front of the house was the table, with everything nicely laid, plentifully decked with flowers, waiting for her and Litzie.

It was only now she perceived that she still held the pineapple she had bought for Litzie convulsively under her arm. She placed it on the table; a cloud seemed to come over her consciousness. All of a sudden the whole thing seemed like an evil dream to her, all this struggle and terror—Klaus was not dead—Litzie had not disappeared—no! Presently they would all sit down together at this pretty, comfortable table to supper and exchange the old, fond, teasing, loving speeches—and form their plans for the future.

Meta brought the photographs, and Nina awoke; awoke *not* from an evil dream, but to the terrible consciousness that it was all only too, too real!

She got into the carriage again, which she had fortunately not thought of dismissing when she arrived.



“To the station!” she cried to the driver, “and for God’s sake, get there in time for the last train!”

The sun was very low by this time, and everything threw a long shadow; the tired, unwilling horses labored heavily along the badly made crossroads; in the distance the sea made its perpetual moan; and all around there was the hissing of the reaping scythes and the dull murmur of the ripe, falling wheat. In Hamburg the Great Reaper of all—Death—was busily gathering in *his* harvest.

During the ensuing days people saw a woman with gray hairs, dressed in black clothes, going about the streets of Hamburg with the photograph of a very beautiful girl in her hand. She had knocked at every door she passed. At first she sought the girl at the hotel; perhaps Litzie had taken refuge there? No! Then she had hurried back to the street in which she had left the little one, and which it now appeared was perhaps the most infected in all Hamburg. She had forced her way into all these houses, so clean and inviting in their exterior, but disclosing, within, such a mass of human misery closely packed together, of lives that could hardly be said to live at all, rather to vegetate! Everywhere, of everybody, the photograph in her hand, she asked after her child; with no result, none, none at all!

The carts that went about for the sick and dead had come often into that street; but, as to speaking precisely about any person in particular whom they might have carried away on the day she specified, they really could not do it; yes, it was quite true, the people had brought dead and sick alike down into the hall together!

And she went on with her search, on and on, further



and further. She went tottering from one watch-house, from one police-station to another, always with the photograph in her hand, and she was very soon only too sadly well known to all the police and other authorities in Hamburg. She sat there with trembling limbs, while others, who were stronger than herself, and whose tongues were readier, stated their business, while the intolerable sound of the telegraph bell was always in her ears, reporting fresh and fresh victims.

When, at last, she could be listened to, all she said was listened to with the greatest sympathy, but with a shake of the head; her story was too familiar. "A young girl in mourning, with a black sailor-hat, like this portrait, only much, *much* prettier, with a little gold chain on the left arm."

Nobody could do anything for her; nobody had even time to try—there was so much else to attend to.

Sometimes, to pacify her, she was asked to leave the picture; every inquiry should be made, and she should be informed directly of anything that came to their knowledge; there was nothing else that could possibly be done. In this way she had parted with all the photographs, all except one. And that one she was determined nobody should have.

She entreated to be allowed to go through the cholera hospitals. But this was either shortly and decisively refused, or she was referred from one authority to another. She came back again and again, always with the same story, which it became more and more difficult for her to tell intelligibly. At last, people got tired of her; they refused to admit her at all, or cut her short if they did. Even when she knocked at the doors of the hospitals they were not opened to her.



Where she spent her nights—whether she returned to the hotel or not—she did not rightly know. One night they took her off to a police-station for shelter. During the day she wandered about the streets, all through the heat and carbolic stench; and, when nobody else would listen to her, she stopped people in the streets as they passed and showed them the child's photograph, and put questions to them which nobody could answer.

But soon the people in the streets got to know her and avoid her. And before long she was pointed at, in the distance, as "the cholera-ghost."

It was not the least of her terrors that the plague and its frightful results were always manifesting themselves to her, who had no way of escape; who, in her misery, could not even think of any. The sight she oftenest saw was one of those shabby old landaus, which were the terror of all Hamburg, stopping before a house. And then some form would come out, supported between a hospital attendant and one of the relatives—the form of some sick creature who could hardly stand, wrapped up closely from head to foot, with a face almost blue and eyes almost broken. And then the unhappy creature was pushed into the carriage. She asked herself what must have been the sufferings of poor Lizzie, poor, tender Lizzie, spoiled as she had been, sensitive as she always had been to everything that could cause disgust, when she found herself in the midst of strangers, forsaken, among the plague-stricken, on coming out of the fainting-fit during which they must have carried her away—to a cholera-hospital! The thought was so frightful that she dug her nails deep into her hands to drive it away.

The fifth of these fearful days drew to its close; night



came on. She went on and on, further and further; went in the direction she now knew so well of one of the hospitals, at whose doors she had knocked so often in vain—knocked until she hurt her fingers. It was quite late. The lamps were lighted. A long, noisy rattling came down the street. A sick-carriage drove past her. She could hear quite plainly the groans of the unhappy creature within.

A sudden thought struck her. Perhaps she would be able to slip into the hospital unobserved in the shadow of the carriage. She hurried after it; and succeeded. Her heart beating loudly, she hid herself among the trees in one of the shadowy recesses of the spacious courtyard.

In the rear of the court she heard a continuous noise of hammering and knocking. Following the direction of the sound, she soon came full on a horrible scene, lighted up by torches flickering in the but slightly cooled night air. The corpse-bearers were busily engaged in their dreadful labors. In one place she saw three great rows of coffins piled five deep, one upon the other. And there—she recoiled! Merciful Heaven! what was this? They were dragging the corpses from the dead-house without a rag of clothing on them, dragging them along by the two arms and thrusting them into the coffins! She became almost stiff with horror!

Then one of the men engaged in this terrible business caught sight of her, and accosted her roughly with the question, What was she doing there?

She tried to say, "I am looking for my child!" She tried to take out the photograph. Then she was seized with a terrible fear that they might take it from her; and it was the last she possessed!

Then there came up one of the sick nurses, just relieved



from her share of night duty, who had come out into the courtyard for some fresh air. A very sturdy, square-built person this was, with penetrating black eyes, looking out of a deeply-browened face. Twenty years of Nina's life seemed suddenly to disappear.

"Augusta!" she stammered.

The other stood still for a moment; then, slowly, as if she could hardly trust her eyes or her ears—

"Nina!"

"How do you come here?" asked Nina.

"My husband is a physician. I have enrolled myself as sick-nurse; every one must do what he can at this dreadful time. But, God in Heaven! what are *you* doing here? how do *you* come here?"

"I am looking for my child!" murmured Nina. Then she drew Augusta deeper among the trees and told her the same terrible story she had already told hundreds; the story no one now was willing to listen to.

Augusta listened to her with the utmost attention. She took the photograph and went with it to one of the lamps.

"Yes, there can be no doubt of it; the child was nere with us. Besides, come, come with me. I can show you her things, which were put aside."

Nina went up the steps with her and into the corridor above. In the scanty light shed by a single lamp lay, one beside the other, a great number of corpses, each one wrapped in the sheet in which it had lain up to the last moment, each with the death certificate in the stiffened hands. Behind the doors was heard the groans and death-rattle of more than one poor creature.

Augusta stepped with Nina to a part of the corridor



where the things were laid aside that belonged to persons who had not been identified. There, on a bundle, lay a small black sailor-hat!

Nina threw herself upon it with a loud cry. She opened the bundle. Yes, there it was; the child's fine linen, the black dress! Nina covered them all with her tears and kisses.

"She is dead!" murmured she in a heavy, dull voice.

"Yes," said Augusta.

Nina stood transfixed, with the bundle in her hand. One of the doors was opened. A corpse was pushed out.

"Come below, come!" said Augusta Jaworsky. And Nina went down, giddy, like a person walking in a dream, into the courtyard.

Here all was still and peaceful, the night breeze sounded pleasantly in the trees, the stars sparkled above. Only that one, uniform, dull, heavy sound of hammering came over to where they stood. And, in the distance, was visible the white shimmer of the dead bodies as they were dragged out of the dead-house.

Nina's eyes were fastened inquiringly upon Augusta's countenance. Augusta understood.

"She did not suffer much," said Augusta. "It is five days now since she was brought here to us. She was entirely unconscious, and it was plain to us that she had been brought here in that condition by some mistake. I undressed her myself and put her in the corner where the less serious cases were. She was so charming that I fell in love with her at the first glance. Yes, indeed, even with all this grief and horror surrounding me. I hoped from one hour to another that she would be able to say something, but she could not. She lay there pale and



quiet, in a sort of waking dream, and it was quite plain that she was wrapped away in visions that protected her from knowledge of the dreadful realities of the case. I remained the whole night by her side. I was able to devote myself to her because I was off duty; it was my turn to go and lie down. Toward morning she became very restless, and I thought that she could hardly avoid returning to consciousness, and I placed myself by the bed in such a position as to screen from her, as much as possible, the sight of what was about her. But it was not consciousness that came on, no—it was the death-struggle. She struggled for breath a few times, and tore at the coverlet, under which she lay, with her small, wasted hands. Then, suddenly, she raised herself up, smiled, as if she saw some angel holding out his arms to her—and sank back. I never saw anybody die with such an expression of bliss on their countenance.”

“Was it of the pestilence she died?”

“The symptoms did not suggest that. If I am not mistaken, she succumbed to an acute attack of heart-disease. Besides, she was of very tender constitution and her poor little frame was quite worn out, even so early. Death only gave a slight stroke to the sweet flower, and it fell to the ground.”

Augusta had finished all she had to tell. There ensued a long, long pause. Nina suddenly turned her head in the direction where the corpses were dragged across the path.

“Was she buried with the others?” asked Nina, with a shudder. It was with difficulty that she could bring herself to ask the question.

“No,” said Augusta. “I could not endure the idea of that. We had her deposited in our own vault.”



"Then, perhaps we could have her removed to Elmstadt?" said Nina.

"Removed! a corpse! from here, at such a time as this? Nina!" Augusta shrugged her shoulders, and then, hastily putting her hands in her pockets—"Here are a couple of trifles which belonged to her."

It was Lizzie's *portemonnaie* and the little armlet which Klaus had given her.

It struck one.

"My time is up. I must go upstairs," said Augusta. "There is very much to do to-day. I allowed myself only one hour's rest. I will take you out."

They went. Nina kept hold all the time of the bundle of the dead girl's clothes. At the gate she was required to give it up; it was against the rules that anything should be carried out that had belonged to a presumed cholera-patient.

Nina hesitated one moment at the threshold. She kissed Augusta's hand and all but went down on her knees to her. The next moment the door closed behind her with a groaning noise; she stood outside on the street—alone!

Her imagination had painted such frightful pictures of what was possible, what *might* have happened, and she had suffered such tortures in consequence, that what she had just heard was almost a relief to her. As for everything else, she was now quite impoverished, quite without resources, and yet, for the moment, at peace with herself.

She stood there for a little while, as though she would never move more. Then, suddenly, the gate of the hospital flew wide open and a tumbril with coffins drove past



her at a sharp trot. The rapid movement of the vehicle made the coffins clash together, and the sound struck Nina's ears painfully. The poor mother shuddered to think that her child's tender body might have had to meet its doom of decay among all these other corpses. And the knowledge that it had been otherwise ordered was some little comfort to her.

And, as this feeling came across her, she saw and knew that the heart in her bosom was not altogether dead.

But it was a pain and grief to her that she could not remove the body to Elmstadt. Then she said to herself that it was perhaps a special dispensation of Providence that there should be no commingling of the earthly parts of the two creatures whose souls had thus heard and called to each other across "the great chasm." Yea, the very dust of their corpses was to be kept tenderly but sternly separate!

---

A FEW days later the old Baroness Jewitsch sat, surrounded by her children and grandchildren, around the evening table at Unkenstein. It had been set out on a lawn that was shaded by lime-trees, and commanded a view of the river Tave. Everything in the persons and the scene spoke of love, comfort, happiness, of beautiful lives and a beautiful landscape. The sweet-smelling mountain breeze was blowing freely, and the sunshine fell warm and full upon the flower-beds on the lawn.



The distress which the sudden death of Klaus Olden had caused these good creatures had now comparatively subsided. His memory would, of course, remain ever fresh in the heart of the baroness, as something dear and consecrated. But it could not be so with the others, of course, to whom he had remained unknown. But their compassionate affection for their sister was heightened by what they knew to have befallen her; though they knew it only partially.

They were all looking with no little anxiety for what the afternoon's post might bring them. Would it bring them some intelligence as to Nina's doings after this long interval? She had not written for a fortnight. In her next letter she would surely announce the day when she would be with them. In view of the dreadful events occurring at Hamburg they would have been thankful to know that she and the child were safe and with them all. But it was positive that the pestilence seemed to stop short of the Holstein frontier. And Nina had no occasion to go to Hamburg at all. So they quieted themselves with these reflections.

It was now ten days since the arrival of the first terror-laden dispatches from the stricken city. People had begun to familiarize themselves a little with the new, sad circumstances. Fright and horror are feelings too strong to last in their first intensity; human nature could never endure such a strain as that. And the good creatures there were, at the moment we see them, laughing; yes, actually laughing at some joke about the cholera-bacillus. Only, the old baroness did not laugh with them!

A step was heard on the gravel; a long black shadow fell upon the table at which they were seated. They all



looked up. Then there came forward among these joyous creatures a woman in deep mourning, with hair as white as snow. Her face was yellow, her eyes were sunk deep in their black sockets. She looked like a woman of seventy. She had a photograph in her hand.

Not one of them knew her. She stood still before the chair in which the baroness sat. She tried to speak, but all that came from her throat was a hoarse, creaking sound. One of the children began to scream and cry for sheer fright.

The old baroness half rose from her seat, and looked more closely into the stranger's eyes. Then the latter sank at her feet—and fainted.

“Nina!” screamed the old woman, stooping to her daughter.

“Nina!” repeated her brothers and sister, with horrified incredulity, “Nina?”

Yes. It was Nina Jewitsch. She had returned to her home.

THE END.



**BUY  
YOUR  
WIFE  
A  
CANARY** and make it sing while its life lasts, by sending to the BIRD FOOD COMPANY, 400 North Third Street, Philadelphia, Pa., for a cake of BIRD MANNA, the wonderful secret of the Hartz Mountain Canary Breeders. It provides the little musician with a food which it cannot otherwise obtain in captivity, and it is therefore a positive necessity to the health of every cage bird. Delivered by mail for postage stamps to the amount of **15 CENTS.**



## Do You Ever Wash Your Hair Brush?

This is the best way: Put one teaspoonful of **Pearline** into a basin of warm water, wash the brush thoroughly in it; rinse in clean water, and set it aside, bristles down, to dry. This is only one—a small one—of the numberless uses to which you can put **Pearline**. Once you have it in the house, you will find something new for it to do every day. It does your washing and cleaning better than soap. Try it on anything for which you've been using soap, and see.

Beware of imitations.

337

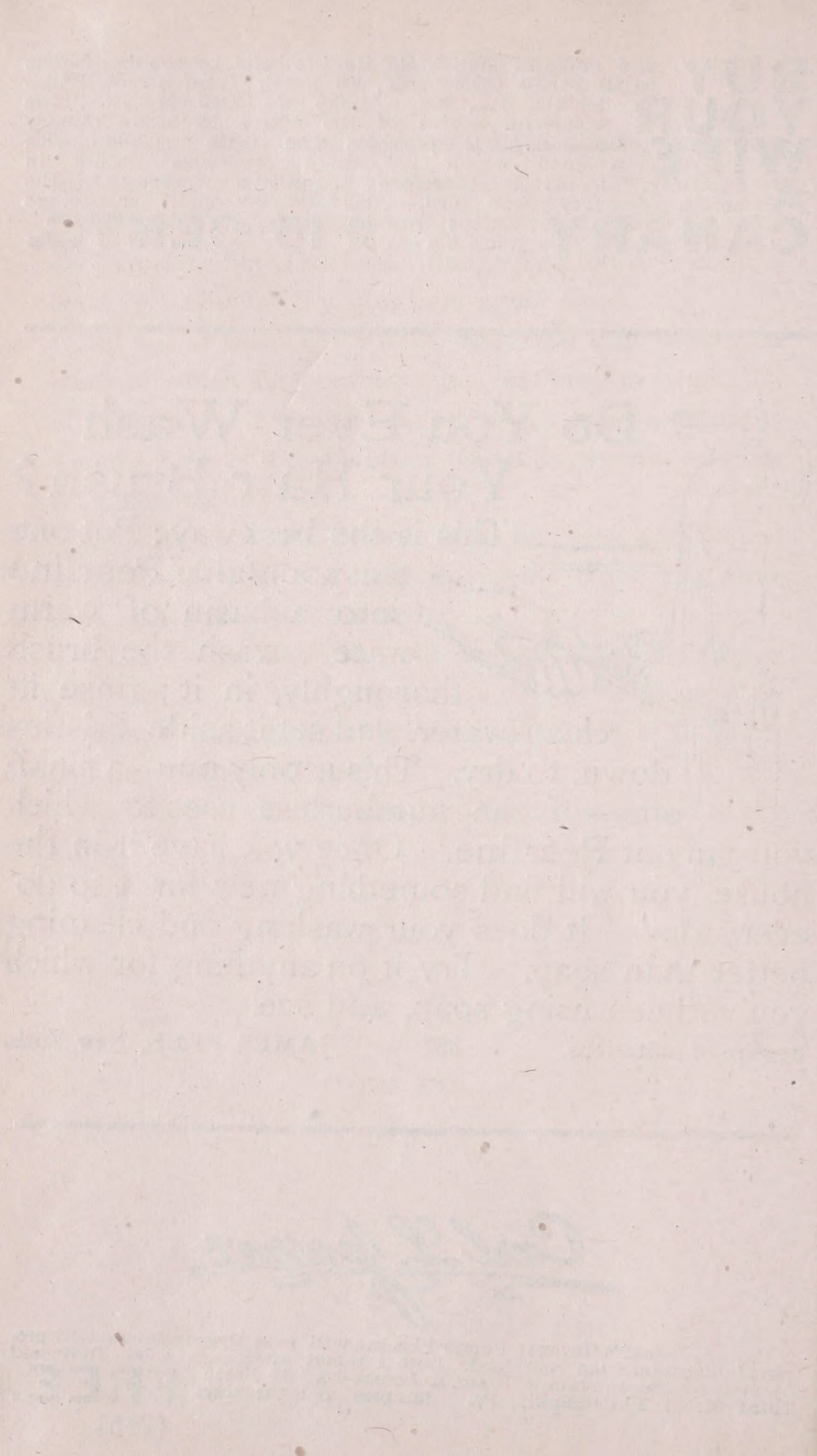
JAMES PYLE, New York.

*Carl L. Jensen's*

CARL L. JENSEN'S CRYSTAL PEPSIN TABLETS will cure Dyspepsia and will prevent Indigestion from rich food. Dose 1 tablet after each meal. Delivered by mail for 50c. in stamps. CARL L. JENSEN Co., 400 North Third Street Philadelphia, Pa. Samples and Circulars **FREE.**

(285)















# BURNETT

--- AT THE ---

# CHICAGO EXPOSITION

WHAT THE RESTAURATEURS AND CATERERS WHO ARE TO FEED  
THE PEOPLE INSIDE THE FAIR GROUNDS THINK OF  
**BURNETT'S EXTRACTS:**

CHICAGO, April 2d, 1893.

Messrs. JOSEPH BURNETT & Co.

*Gentlemen:* After careful tests and investigation of the merits of your flavoring extracts, we have decided to give you the entire order for our use, in our working department as well as in all our creams and cakes, used in all of our restaurants in the buildings of the World's Columbian Exposition at Jackson Park.

Very truly yours,  
WELLINGTON CATERING CO.  
By ALBERT S. GAGE, President.

CHICAGO, April 26th, 1893.

Messrs. JOSEPH BURNETT & Co.,

Boston and Chicago.

*Gentlemen:* After careful investigation we have decided that BURNETT'S Flavoring Extracts are the best. We shall use them exclusively in the cakes, ice creams and pastries served in Banquet Hall and at New England Clam Bake in the World's Fair grounds.

N. E. WOOD, Manager,  
New England Clam Bake Building.  
F. K. McDONALD, Manager,  
Banquet Hall.

WOMAN'S BUILDING, }  
WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION. }  
CHICAGO, April 21st, 1893.

Messrs. JOSEPH BURNETT & Co.,

Boston and Chicago.

*Gentlemen:* We take pleasure in stating that BURNETT'S Flavoring Extracts will be used exclusively in the Garden Cafe, Woman's Building, World's Columbian Exposition, during the period of the World's Fair.

RILEY & LAWFORD.

COLUMBIA CASINO CO.

Messrs. JOSEPH BURNETT & Co.,

Boston and Chicago.

*Gentlemen:* We take pleasure in stating that BURNETT'S Flavoring Extracts will be used exclusively in the cuisine of the Columbia Casino Restaurant, at the World's Fair Grounds, as it is our aim to use nothing but the best. Respectfully,

H. A. WINTER, Manager.

TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, }  
WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION. }  
CHICAGO, April 24, 1893.

Messrs. JOSEPH BURNETT & Co.

*Gents:* After careful tests and comparisons we have decided to use "BURNETT'S EXTRACTS" exclusively in our ice creams, ices and pastry. Very respectfully,

SCHARPS & KAHN,  
Caterers for the "Golden Gate Cafe,"  
Transportation Building.  
"TROCADERO,"  
Cor. 16th Street and Michigan Avenue.

"THE GREAT WHITE HORSE" INN CO., }  
WORLD'S COLUMBIAN }  
EXPOSITION GROUNDS. }

CHICAGO, ILL., U. S. A., April 26, 1893.  
Messrs. JOSEPH BURNETT & Co.,  
Boston and Chicago.

*Gentlemen:* It being our aim to use nothing but the best we have decided to use BURNETT'S Flavoring Extracts *exclusively*, in the ice cream, cakes and pastries served in "The Great White Horse" Inn, in the grounds of the World's Columbian Exposition. Very truly yours,

T. B. SEELEY, Manager,  
"The Great White Horse" Inn Co.

The Restaurants that have contracted to use BURNETT'S EXTRACTS, exclusively,  
are as follows:

WELLINGTON CATERING CO.,  
"THE GREAT WHITE HORSE" INN,  
THE GARDEN CAFE,  
WOMAN'S BUILDING.

COLUMBIA CASINO CO.,  
THE GOLDEN GATE CAFE,  
NEW ENGLAND CLAM BAKE CO.,  
BANQUET HALL.

**JOSEPH BURNETT & CO., BOSTON, MASS.**



"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

# BEECHAM'S PILLS

CURE  
**SICK HEADACHE,**  
**DISORDERED LIVER, ETC.**

They Act Like Magic on the Vital Organs, Regulating the Secretions, restoring long lost Complexion, bringing back the Keen Edge of Appetite, and arousing with the ROSEBUD OF HEALTH the whole physical energy of the human frame. These Facts are admitted by thousands, in all classes of Society. Largest Sale in the World.

**669**  
Covered with a Tasteless & Soluble Coating.

Of all druggists. Price 25 cents a box.

New York Depot, 365 Canal St.























**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**



00021915257

